

TRAVELS IN PERSIA,

GEORGIA AND KÓORDISTAN;

WITH

SKETCHES OF THE COSSACKS AND THE CAUCASUS.

FROM THE GERMAN OF

DR. MORITZ WAGNER.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

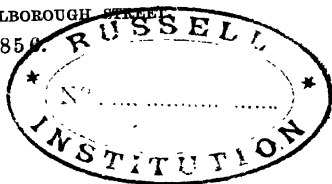
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PERSIA

AND

THE KOORDS.

PART III.

CHAPTER III.

Journey over the Turco-Persian Plateau—The Koords—Kara-gös—Caravan Life and Habits of the Horses—Wolves—Panthers and Tigers—Vultures—Koordish Thieves—Town and Table Land of Hassan-Kaleh—Koordish Dwellings—Observations on the Koords—Topra-Kaleh—Convent of Utsch-Kilissa—Observations on the Armenian Clergy—Mount Ararat—Koordish Banditti—Bajasid.

THE journey across the Armenian highlands to Persia, is commonly made in caravans or with post-horses, occasionally in company with a government Tartar. The latter travels *en courier*, changes horses every four or five hours, rides at the usual Eastern pace, galloping all the stage, never rests more than one hour, rides many a horse to death, and makes the journey from Erzeroum to Tabris, comprising

250 miles, in the marvellously short space of two days and a half. Englishmen, with their usual resolution, have frequently attempted the journey in this fashion. But they have subsequently admitted that they would prefer fox-hunting for a month without intermission, together with incessant steeple-chases and boxing matches, to a repetition of this pleasure trip, *à la Tartare*.

The Turkish post has no resemblance to the European, save in the name. There are neither post-masters, post-houses nor postillions in Turkey, in the proper acceptation of those terms. But a firman of the Padischah or Pacha, secures everywhere a supply of horses and a driver. The charges are moderate, but it is not prudent to make the journey from Erzeroum to the Persian frontier, without a Turkish cawass, who charges 500 Turkish piastres for the favour of his company. Even then the undertaking is not free from danger.

Almost all the passes of the Armenian highlands, are the lurking places of Koordish robbers, whose lynx eyes are ever on the look-out for unwary and unguarded wanderers.

The Koords who unite the character of herdsmen and thieves, and who are encamped or roam over the highest summits, plateaux and valleys with their flocks, are always ready to raise their wolf-like schream, to poise their long bamboo lance, and pounce upon travellers and caravans as often as the resistance is not likely to be too determined, and the booty is sufficiently attractive. It is true, that the Koords have become much more peaceful, tame and honest, since the Pachas have employed the Nizam to reduce the district to order. But the Koords are still occasionally attacked by fits of their old distemper, and their nomadic habits facilitate their predatory pursuits. If the frontier Pachas of Kars or Bajasid, &c. march against the Koords with the Nizam, to wrest their unlawful gains from them, and to chastise them, the robbers fly over the Persian border, send a few presents to the Sardar of Tabris, and then they commonly linger on the table lands of Aserbeidschan, with their flocks and herds, till repeated complaints of Koordish robberies, reach the Persian authorities of Tabris, Choi

or Urmia. Threatened anew, the nomadic hordes fly over the wild declivities of the Agri-Dagh to the Russian territory, and by presenting the commandant of the border Cossacks with some beautiful horses, obtain permission to pitch their tents on the pastures of Ararat. If complaints reach the Russian Natschalnik at Erivan, relating to the occasional exercise of their predatory habits, the horde can always seek a last refuge in the highlands of Koordistan, and escape the clutches of the Turkish Nizam, in its fastnesses, where they secure the protection of some powerful Koordish chief, by appropriate bribes.

Not long previous to my departure from Erzeroum, Mr. Abbot, English Consul at Teheran had been stripped to the shirt, together with his escort, by Koordish robbers. Mr. Abbot was a man of great personal courage, but his unavailing and unseasonable attempts to secure his dignity and independance, led to this tragi-comical catastrophe. The representative of the great British Empire, whose sceptre holds sway over the ocean and over half the earth, was subjected to the same

indignities here, as his countrymen in Bokhara, though not terminating so fatally. Yet there was no sufficient redress in either case.

Mr. Abbot was attacked near Diadin. He pointed a pistol, which luckily missed fire, at the first Koord who charged him, lance in rest. His own death must have paid for the blood of the Koord, if he had slain him. Two heavy pokes with the lance, which happily pierced his burka instead of his skin, unsaddled the doughty Briton, whose Oriental suite being totally deficient in his pluck, laid down their arms without farther resistance, terrified at the looks and schreams of the Koords, who showed themselves magnanimous after their fashion. For though they carried off horses, luggage and the very clothes from the backs of their victims, they left them their lives. And though Mr. Abbot had been regaled with a volley of lance - blows and whip - lashes, this was regarded as a requital for the attempted pistol shot. No injury was inflicted on his Armenian servants, who had politely laid down their arms. Naked as Adam before the Fall, the party set forth on their wander-

ings amidst the wild laughter of the Koords, and at the first village they reached, they were scantily provided with clothes by its Armenian inhabitants. Consul Brandt made a great disturbance about the affair, and the Pacha was obliged to pay a pecuniary compensation. But the Koords retired to their inaccessible fastnesses, where they mocked at the wrath, and threats of the British Consul and the Turkish Pacha.

The safest, cheapest, and pleasantest mode of travelling to Persia, is by great trading caravans, which leave Erzeroum almost every week for Tabris, conveying thither British cotton, and manufactures with merchandize from the Leipzig Fair, and from Nuremburg. The smallest of the caravans generally consist of from two to three hundred, the largest of nine hundred horses. Mules are seldom employed, and I only saw camels on one occasion between Salmas and Choi, but they did not pass the Turkish frontier. Every four horses have on the average, one driver, who goes on foot, or reclines behind a pack-saddle, and is commonly armed with a firelock, dagger, or sword. If the caravan convey merchandize of peculiar value, the

Pacha usually provides it with a cawass, who rides at the head of the column, carrying a long lance with a horse's tail attached to it, answering as a warning to the Koords, and a protection to the caravan, thus placed under the immediate care of the Pacha of Erzeroum. The strength of the caravan is, however, a more effectual safeguard, than the presence of the cawass. For, though the Armenians are generally tame and cowardly people, they defend their property with the fury of a lioness guarding her whelps, and as the bands of Koords, on this road, are commonly much inferior in numbers, caravan journeys are attended with comparative security. On the other hand, the strongest caravan is unable to guard against the pilfering of the Koords during the night; and we witnessed some amusing instances of their cleverness in this art.

The caravan with which I travelled to Persia, through Hassan-Kaleh and Diadin, was under the guidance of a wealthy Armenian named Kara-gös, *i. e.* black eye. His appellation was appropriate, for the first objects that struck you in contemplating his short, stumpy person, were a pair of unprepossessing, slightly squinting, coal-black eyes. Later, I discovered that he

was deformed and lame. Nevertheless his ungainly exterior did not diminish his importance at Erzeroum. Though corporeal beauty, and an imposing person exert a great influence in the East, wealth has still greater weight. Kara-gös brought the Pacha of Erzeroum, annually, a beautiful horse of Turcoman or Karabagh breed, was admitted to kiss the hands of the Lord of three Tails, and gave handfuls of backshish to porters and seraglio servants, as he passed through the ante-chambers. These arguments were so convincing, that the giaourdom and squint of the hunchback Raja, were lost sight of, and all his whims about the Caravan were readily granted. He bore the proud title of *Karivan-Bascha*, i. e. head of the caravan, and he expected to be treated with respect proportional to the dignity.

The caravan commanded by Kara-gös, consisted of 360 horses, of which, one half were his own property. The remainder were owned chiefly by Armenian proprietors, to whom Kara-gös confided part of his goods, which the Russian Consul had handed over to him as freight. Some of these Armenians speculated on their own account, and I made an agreement

with one of them the evening before our departure. We left Erzeroum about noon, rode over the ridge separating the table land of Erzeroum to the Eastward, from the plateau of Hassan-Kaleh, and reached the caravan at sunset, encamped in the vicinity of the little town of that name. The weather was agreeable, and the temperature most genial on these high Armenian plateaux. From Hassan-Kaleh, we proceeded onward in short day's journeys. In summer, the caravans always travel by night, they commonly march nine to twelve miles, encamp shortly after sunrise, and turn their horses in the pastures, where they leave them till two o'clock of the forenoon. In winter, when the horses are shod with iron, they march daily twice the distance, and pass the nights in the towns and villages. If we except the slowness of this mode of travelling (I was twenty-seven days on the road from Erzeroum to Tabris) a caravan journey has many attractions for a person who wishes to obtain more than a superficial knowledge of the country. During the daily halt, I had leisure to roam over the mountains near our bivouac, to shoot game and to make collections.

One of the most interesting features of caravan travelling, is presented by the instincts and habits of the animals forming it. Caravan cattle have the peculiarity of being stubbornly attached to their customs, of respecting the established order, of partiality for social intercourse with acquaintances and friends, whether bipeds, or quadrupeds; they are, moreover, very inhospitable, and will not tolerate the slightest familiarity on the part of strange animals. These remarks apply especially to the horses. The mules, asses, and dromedaries which you only meet in Persia, have their peculiar idiosyncracies, and require a separate description.

It would be almost impossible to preserve the necessary order, in such a crowd, and amidst the din occasioned by the mingled shouts and cries of some hundreds of men, and beasts, were it not for the docility of the caravan horses, and their respect for traditional usages. This applies especially to the tumult accompanying the halting, or starting of the caravan, from its night quarters or daily encampment. The gentle and docile character of the Oriental horses, notwithstanding their fiery spirit, is very con-

ducive to the preservation of order. They never present the vicious, spiteful temperament of the Gaucho steeds in the American Pampas, nor the stubborn wilfulness of Wallachian and Cossack horses, in the steppes of the Danube, and the Don, where the *Tabuntschik* can scarcely reduce his wild herds to order by the most vigorous exertions of his voice and *lasso*. The free and independant cattle of the steppe, with their republican principles, would never bend the neck to a pack-saddle, or the caravan discipline.

Every caravan horse has a bell attached to his neck, and its sound would betray his vagaries, if he were disposed to stroll from the line of march, and wander into the pastures or over the mountains. But attempts of this nature are confined to novices. The trained and disciplined pack-horse rarely gives cause for complaint. Scarcely has the Caravan-Baschi giving the signal for starting, two hours after midnight, ere a loud neighing, snuffling and ringing of bells, emanating from the horses, driven in from the pastures, gives intimation that they are all ready, fresh and anxious to march. On these occasions, the silence of the

night and of the bivouac, are dispelled by sights and sounds, effectually banishing sleep from the wanderer, till the last horse has received his load, and the last tent is struck. Notwithstanding the darkness, the intelligent animals manage to keep their right position, near their own master, and they always scent out the drivers who load, feed, and water them. Amidst the greatest din, and throng of shouting men, the beast stands immoveable till his pack saddle and load, are placed and carefully poised on his back. This operation never consumes above a few seconds. With a shout and a swing, two men hoist the load, and cast it on the pack saddle, and scarcely has the horse perceived that it is on his back, ere he starts of his own accord, all the cattle following each other, invariably in single file. The best trained Russian regiment does not march more steadily, or keep the step and arrangement with more regularity, than these caravan horses, wherever the nature of the ground, and direction of the track allow it. If any confusion disturb the line of march, occasioned by some accident, such as the fall of a horse, or the passage of another caravan, the animal which comes

nearest to the scene of disorder halts, together with the horse behind it. The whole column remains stationary, the ringing of bells is hushed, and the quadrupeds look as riveted to the ground, as the steeds of the Quirinal, without requiring any interference on the part of their drivers. As soon as the impediment is removed, the animals move on again, of their own accord. The usual measured tread is resumed, and the bells ring out their peal again, which reverberates among the rocks and ravines of the Armenian Alps.

It is customary to place the oldest and most experienced horse at the head of a column. This leader is commonly a long-maned patriarch, who has travelled on the road many a year, has an accurate knowledge of localities, and is justly proud of his experience and equine intelligence. This sagacious animal never loses his way, he is never disturbed if a block of rock of a peculiar shape, or a skeleton lies in the path, or even if some camels, which are especial objects of dread, happen to pass by. Even when the sky is darkened with tempests, and the thunder rolls, and lightning blazes, and the rain and hail create alarm and con-

fusion among the younger animals, the veteran leader does not lose his self-possession. The example of the guiding horse re-acts favourably in tranquillizing those behind him, whereas any unsteadiness in the leader instantly passes along the file, creating disturbance and disorder in the column. The patriarchs are never at fault, even in the darkest nights, being guided by instinct, and great familiarity with the road, nor is there the least cause for anxiety, even in the thickest fog. If a river or raging torrent intercept the road, the old leader stands still, until the rider nearest at hand, discovers the shallowest ford, when the patriarch and his immediate followers follow in his wake, and are succeeded by the most inured horses, and ultimately by the novices, wading or swimming through the stream. It cannot be concealed that these exploits are not invariably unattended with danger. After a great thaw or a heavy rain, the torrents occasionally acquire tremendous power and dimensions, and sweep away the struggling animals in their current. Nevertheless they are generally preserved by their instinct and sagacity.

It is very entertaining to meet a strange

caravan coming from the opposite direction ; in the silence of the night, you generally hear the sound of its bells at a considerable distance. Some of the horsemen who act as vanguard to the caravan, protecting it from the onslaught of Koords and wolves, by firing off their pieces and resisting the attack, ride ahead in the darkness or the dawn, to reconnoitre, if possible, the approaching column. If the people of the approaching caravan are friends, acquaintances, or, at all events, fellow believers, mutual greetings are exchanged, and both parties engage in animated conversation. The Caravan-Baschis, being men of greater consequence, exchange a formal salutation, and compare notes respecting the novelties, state of trade, or political occurrences at Trebizond and Tabris. Not unfrequently rapid bargains are concluded, provisions are supplied, and horses are purchased. But if the escort of the respective caravans are of different nations and creeds, it is rarely that any commercial intercourse takes place between them. They scarcely condescend to give each other a passing salam ; and generally prefer to pass each other in silence. The Shiites* of the

* Sectaries of Ali.

Tartar race possess a good share of Turkish haughtiness and fanaticism, and though the Armenians are generally easy, and peaceable people, their excessive obsequiousness has been considerably diminished since the last Russian war. The Armenian Caravan-Baschi is perfectly conscious of the influence resulting from his wealth, and the protection of the European Consuls. On the other hand, the former superciliousness of the Moslems, towards the Christian Rajas, especially in Anatolia, has been greatly modified. The relative position of Christians and Mahomedans in Persia, though still far from amicable, has become tolerable, and if the truth must be told, this state of things has resulted from the victorious sword of Paskiewitsch, who broke the pride of the Persians, probably for ever.

The caravan horses are not more tolerant to strangers, than their masters. They cannot endure horses that do not belong to their peculiar clique. If two caravans happen to be encamped near each other, their respective horses, whilst grazing in the pastures, watch each other with their ears pricked up, gallop

neighing up and down, whilst their snorting nostrils, and curling manes, bespeak their pugnacious temperament. This happens, especially if stallions accompany either or both of the caravans, these animals being the peculiar objects of envy and animosity, even on the part of geldings of the opposite party. But even if there be no sexual occasion of dispute, most of the younger and fiery horses become very unmanageable, directly they see any strangers of their own species. Under the influence of this excitement, they generally resist all the authority and chastisements of their masters. At length, one of the most spirited steeds, unable any longer to keep under his desire for battle, gallops wildly to the hostile pasture, challenging his foes with the summons of his neighings. He is commonly followed by his most fiery comrades, who act as escort and seconds. A wild and warlike outburst of neighing, resounding like the blast of a spirit stirring trumpet, challenges the most valiant of the foe to the encounter. The challenge is commonly accepted, and the reply from the opposite side is as full of defiance and metal as the summons. Foaming and prancing, a long legged Turcoman

horse dashes away to encounter the fire-coloured stallion of Erzeroum, or a grey mare from Karabagh. Lashing and biting, the two antagonists engage in mortal affray, each seeking to seize the other in the flank. Neighing and foaming, their comrades dart up, on both sides, to the rescue. There is much fraternal feeling between the horses of the same caravan, and the tournament would speedily enlarge into a general battle, were it not for the shouts and curses of the drivers, who hurrying up with their whips, soon disperse the combatants.

When two caravans meet on the march, this feeling of hostile animosity to strangers is not exhibited. The horses are then under the restraint of discipline, and betray no symptoms of impatience or pugnacious propensities. The heavy laden columns pass each other peacefully, though you may occasionally hear the neighing of a stallion, amidst the clang of bells; but a few lashes, and the spur and bit keep them in effectual order. Our Turkish cawass rode a splendid young black stallion, which, being in the prime of life and in capital condition, was naturally rather lively. Being

a stranger in the herd, it was always necessary to tie him up, to preserve him from the jealousy of the other horses. Novices receive commonly a most uncourteous treatment. Kara-gös bought, occasionally, fresh horses, at the Koordish villages, and they were often very ill-treated, at first, by their companions, nor could they scarcely manage to stand their ground against the storm of blows and kicks with which they were greeted, though their own hoofs and hides were tolerably tough. It was frequently necessary to employ the lash to rescue these unhappy victims.

It occasionally happens, when caravans meet, that old acquaintances, in the respective columns, recognize each other—animals that have, perhaps, often travelled together in the same caravan, that have been born in the same stable, grown up together in the same pastures, and been subsequently exchanged, or sold, to different masters. A faithful and grateful memory appears one of the peculiar characteristics of Oriental, and especially of caravan horses. A remarkably loud neighing, emanating even from pack horses, often betrays the joyful surprise of

these poor animals, in meeting again their old playmates, who had shared bed and board, pleasure and pain, pack and pasture with them for long years.

Karapet-Bedochil had agreed to mount me on one of his youngest and best horses. It was a chesnut mare of middle size, fine shape and good action. The disposition of this animal was remarkably gentle, so long as you respected her habits. In the opposite case, she showed a very stubborn temper, and it required some time to break her into my ways and bring her to adopt my own pace, and deviate from the track of the caravan.

It is somewhat tedious to ride in the rank and file of a caravan. Accordingly, as soon as the dawn appeared, and the first beams of the sun irradiated the green mountain slopes, I used to take pleasure in riding aside to the neighbouring heights, in order to view the landscape, and gratify my eye with the picturesque appearance of the Koordish encampments, and of the caravan procession. But my mare never shared in my delight. It took much spurring to bring her to part from her comrades, even

for a few minutes. Sociability and antipathy to solitude, are among the most striking characteristics of these animals. Occasionally, I stayed behind the caravan, if I chanced to encounter some very interesting spot, offering sundry attractions to the naturalist. In such cases, I used to tie the mare to a rock, but she always looked with a longing eye after the caravan. When the last stragglers were out of sight, she used to prick her ears, so long as the ringing of bells was still audible. But when this sound had died away, she would drop her head sadly, and look with an inquiring and appealing look at her master. Though it required hard tugging to bring her to move aside or step behind, when it was my purpose to overtake the caravan, she displayed all the fire of the Oriental horse, and flew like the wind till she came within hearing of the bells. As soon as she recovered sight of her comrades, she would break out into a loud neighing.

This sociable and brotherly feeling of the Armenian horses, is a serious impediment to the plots of the Koordish thieves, who creep round the encampment by night.

Accordingly, they have devised the plan of carrying on their thievish operations, themselves mounted on old caravan horses, which they had stolen and trained for the purpose. A sling is cast round the neck of some horse that is grazing, and whilst one of the thieves holds fast the end of the rope, and draws the captured horse after him, another Koord applies the lash behind. The Armenian guards fire off their firelocks as an alarm signal, and fly after the thieves, on their best horses. If they overtake them, they try, at first, by fair words or threats, to induce the Koords to give up their prey, and they only resort to fire-arms as a last resort, because they stand in awe of Koordish blood feuds.

The attacks of wolves, in winter, are much less dreaded than the robberies and onslaughts of the Koords. The wolves are naturally much more timid and cowardly than is generally supposed, nor does anything, short of absolute famine and desperation, lead them to conquer their natural shyness of man. It occasionally happens, indeed, that a pack of hungry wolves, congregate together, break into the marching column, seize and tear to pieces some wretched

horse, before the drivers can come to the rescue. The wolves show great sagacity in selecting the weakest point of the column for their attack. But occurrences of this sort do not come to pass once in ten years, and only in the longest and severest winters. It is a most common accident, that in summer, single wolves crawl in among the grazing horses, but the wonderful instinct of the latter, generally detects the foe at once. They rally with all speed, and form a circle, their heads facing inwards, and their hind hoofs ready for action. If the wolf do not succeed at the first spring, in tearing open the throat of his victim, the case is generally hopeless, for the serried phalanx salutes the intruder with a volley of kicks, and if he do not make off quickly, he falls a victim to the bullets of the guards hurrying to the rescue. The wolf only hazards these attacks by night, for by day he is almost as cowardly as the jackal.

Caravans are in no danger from other beasts of prey, on the road from Erzeroum to Tabris. The jackals are weak and timid, and though they follow the caravans in winter, this is only for the purpose of picking up refuse. Bears are

not so frequently met with, as in the woody region towards Lasistan and Colchis, where they devour sheep and goats, but never attack horses. But there is much more danger between Tabris and Teheran, and especially to the southward, on the road to Ispahan. Here the Turcomans take the place of the Koords, and wolves are replaced by panthers. Nevertheless the number of these ravenous animals is much less considerable, and their fear of man much greater than has been represented. I subsequently spoke to caravan leaders in Persia, who had travelled on the road from Tabris to Teheran for thirty years, without being troubled by wild beasts. Others only knew of a few cases in which panthers or tigers had broken into the caravan by night, and had torn to pieces one individual of the cattle. The splendid woody region of Masenderan is the favourite resort of panthers, but it is only crossed by small caravans. In the Turcoman wilderness, in Khorāsan, and on the road from Ispahan to Shiraz, solitary tigers are frequently encountered, and occasion the caravans not a little anxiety by night. The only other animals that regularly escort the

caravans, and that call for particular notice are the ravens and hawks, which devour the excrements of the horses in winter, and the flesh of the fallen steeds in summer. I saw the same white-headed vulture (*vultur fulvus*) as in Algeria, soaring at an immense height above the column, and immediately that a horse dropped dead, a dozen of these powerful birds darted down, and fastened on their prey.

The animals of the caravan, including the dogs, are on tolerably good terms with these vultures, or, at all events, suffer considerable familiarities on their part. Possibly some mysterious sympathy is at work here, and the horse is conscious that the maw of the bird will become his coffin, and the grave of the greater part of his flesh. After satisfying their hunger in the pastures, the horses would congregate together in thick array, in a hot day, and drooping their necks seek for shade under their neighbour's body, nor did they appear at all discomposed by the presence of a vulture perched on their backs, indeed they were so polite as not to stir, that they might not disturb his slumbers. I occasionally saw ravens, too, perched in this sociable manner on the backs of the

horses, or dromedaries. Similar partialities are observed in Africa, between the vultures and cows, ravens and pigs, whilst the silver heron and the ibis have been detected in the same sociable relations with elephants. There is only one animal that is an object of special aversion to the Armenian caravan horse, and that is the camel. Nor can the latter endure horseflesh. This antipathy is retained even in caravans, where both species of animals have been long accustomed to each other's society. Horses and camels always go separately to pasture, if they are not interfered with. Hostile demonstrations are prevented in the case of long intercourse and habit, but during my protracted stay in the East, I never knew an instance of even cool and distant friendship between these beasts.

At three o'clock in the morning, of the 18th of June, I was awoke on the Pasin table-land of the Armenian highlands, by the jingle of the bells, as the horses mustered from the pastures. It was the first night that I had passed in a caravan encampment, and being as yet unaccustomed to the tumult of this novel scene, I observed this curious picture with much interest by the first light of dawn. Kara-gös,

the Caravan-Baschi, had pitched his great tent in the centre of the camp. The bales of goods piled up in a square, formed a sort of entrenchment, serving as a protection against the attacks of the Koords. Sheltered by this bulwark, those Armenians who were provided with fire-arms had undertaken to watch. Kara-gös behaved quite like a Pacha. He strutted about, throwing back his short mis-shapen body with the utmost importance, and he was followed wherever he went by a crowd of obsequious servants, ready to execute his orders. Next to him, in consequence, were the *Kadirtschis*, or horse-owners of the caravan, who had either hired their animals to Kara-gös, or laden them on their own account. Though respectful in their demeanour to their leader, they were not so brow-beaten by him as the drivers, on whom Kara-gös discharged all the contents of his vials of wrath, if any accident befel their charge, and who being poor and dependant, were necessarily unprotected. The position and importance of the *Kadirtschis* depended exclusively on the number of horses owned by them. But there was one man with us, whose appearance alone created a greater effect than

all our Kadirschis and Baschi together. This was the Turkish cawass, bestowed on us by the Seraskier Kiamil Pacha, as our guard through the land of the Koords. This individual was understood to represent the dignity of the Sublime Porte, and riding at the head of the column, with lance and horse tails, gave the Koords intimation, who might have a sly lust for pilfer, that the goods were under the protection of the mighty Seraskier of Erzeroum. Notwithstanding his atheletic figure, this cawass was a very good-humoured Turk of phlegmatic character, free from all arrogance, and using his authority chiefly to support the influence of the Caravan-Baschi.

The little town of Hassan-Kaleh is situated at the northern base of a very high rock, and presents a very miserable appearance. Its walls are in ruins, and half its houses dilapidated, even the old fort on the rock presents a complete wreck; in fact the nearer you approach the Turco-Persian frontier, the greater are the signs of decay. Mineral springs gush forth from the soil in this remarkably volcanic region.

Hassan-Kaleh is reported to have been an old Genoese station, but the matter is disputed, nor

can I settle the question. Certain it is, that the principal frontier towns of Anatolia on the Persian border, are regarded as Genoese stations, some of which are even traced to Aserbeidschan.

In its present wretched condition, Hassan-Kaleh could offer no resistance to a European force, especially as it is commanded by the neighbouring heights. The little Hassan-Kaleh river, which flows close to the town, is 5140 French feet above the sea.

The table-land of Pasin is not so broad, but almost as long as the plateau of Erzeroum. The mountain chains inclosing it to the south and north, are continuations of the ridges, which form the boundaries of the plain of Erzeroum. The Araxes which bisects the basin of Parsin, is, even at this season, a considerable river, too deep to be forded, and formerly spanned by a solid stone bridge, attributed to Darius Hystaspes, but long since mutilated and disfigured by a wooden arch in the centre.

Our caravan encamped this evening in some beautiful meadows, six miles from the Araxes. The nearest Turkish village was called Juswara, not a vestige of wood is to be seen in the whole

country, and the Armenians were obliged to use dung as fuel to boil our coffee and soup.

On the 19th of June, we reached the foot of a mountain chain, called in the map of the Russian staff, Kussah-dagh, forming the southern boundary of the Basin of Pasin, separating it from the plateau of Topra-Kaleh.

About two miles from our encampment, appeared the black tents of some Koordish nomadic families, whom I visited, armed with my fowling piece, but I found no one, save the women and children at home, as the men were away with the herds at the mountain pastures, and were not expected to return till the evening. The Koordish tents are stretched over a basket-work of reeds, which rising about two feet from the ground, form the tent poles, and admit a free current of air. They are tolerably spacious and handsomer than the tents in the *douars* of the Bedouins in Algeria. The women were remarkably ugly, and as scantily clad as the gypsy women of Southern Russia. Their ears, necks, and arms were adorned with necklaces, rings, and bracelets of bad tin and lead. They seemed astonished, but by no means frightened, on seeing me and my gun. I asked for some

jauert, (sour milk) and promised them money, but they replied that they had no provisions of any kind. On the neighbouring mountains, I met a jackal, who suffered me to creep up within range, and I brought him down at the first shot.

On the 20th of June, the caravan passed by the Koordish village of Jendek, and we entered the mountains, leaving the large village of Delibaba, inhabited exclusively by Koords, to the left. The morning was so cold, that I was almost freezing, notwithstanding Mackintosh and cloak. We rode through a narrow pass, containing a wonderful echo, the responses of which were freely elicited by the guns and pistols of the caravan. Our tents were pitched in a narrow valley, watered by a brook, and I ascended the neighbouring hills, hoping to obtain a view of Mount Ararat, but intervening mountains shut out the prospect. The Turkish Cavass told me, after my return, that the hill I had ascended, was one of the most dangerous spots in the land of the Koords, and if I had made my excursion ten years ago, my life would have been in imminent danger. In former years, it

was a rare case for a caravan to encamp in this pass, without being attacked by swarms of Koords. But since the introduction of the Nizam, these attempts have gradually died out, and now you very seldom hear of such accidents.

Towards evening, we were visited by a Koordish chieftain, in a handsome costume. He did not wear a beard, but long and bushy mustachios, like the Janissaries of old, his head was enveloped in a huge turban, and his body in a short burka, whilst very wide trousers completed his attire. He caused his horse to be shod by one of our Armenians, and begged one of our merchants for a pocket knife, as a token of remembrance. He did not pay a farthing for the shoeing of his horse, and rode off with a laconic expression of thanks, but he was saluted with the utmost politeness by all our party, including the Caravan-Baschi. When I asked the Kadertschi, afterwards, why he did not insist on being paid for his time and trouble, he replied :

“ You may laugh, if you please, but if you were to meet that fellow alone, all your courage would evaporate.”

and I admit that the Koord, who was armed to the teeth, with gun, pistols, and sword, looked uncommonly like a robber chieftain.

The following day, Kara-gös gave the signal for starting, much later than usual, and we only made a short march, because it was desirable to spare some sick horses. We encamped near the summit of the pass. Our eyes were, at length, gladdened at this place, with the sight of a few bushes, growing by a brook, the first specimens of large vegetation we had seen since leaving Erzeroum.

I made an excursion to the neighbouring height, and obtained a wide and distant prospect, the eye embracing, on one hand, the snowy chain, giving birth to the Euphrates, and forming the centre of the Armenian highlands, and constituting the extreme Eastern horizon of these highlands. The mighty Ararat appears, seen from here, like an immense pyramid of snow, shooting up into the transparent blue of the heavens, like a silver cone. At this distance (more than twelve miles) the mountain of the Deluge, which towers aloft without a rival, rising like a colossal ghost from the dark background, presents a much grander appearance

than at Etchmiazin, and close at hand, at the foot of the ravine of St. Jacob, another white summit could be detected near the giant mountain, and was probably the little Ararat. The mountain chain, of which the group of Ararat forms the eastern boundary, becomes lower and more formal in shape, losing its bold and picturesque features as it approaches the foot of the Great Volcano. The other large volcanoes beyond the great plain of the Araxes were not visible where I stood. Straight before me, to the north, the solitary dome of the Kussah-Dagh, partially covered with snow, towered aloft, and even the ridges of Lasistan, towards Ispir could be discerned, while the prospect was obstructed to the southward, by higher mountains.

On the 22nd of June, as the caravan was on the march towards the eastern declivity, I saw about dawn, several Koordish horsemen, armed with bamboo-lances, gallop down to the head of our column. I was riding near the leader, and anticipating a serious attack, I had unslung my double-barrelled gun, when my Armenian driver warned me not to show any hostile intentions to the Koords. The armed Kadertschis allowed

the horsemen to come up, without let or hindrance, and even the Turkish cawass rode along quietly, with his usual Turkish phlegm and dignity, suffering his lance and horsetails to lie on his shoulder. It was evident that no hostile intentions were apprehended on the part of the Koords. They rode straight up to the Caravan-Baschi, and there ensued, shortly after, a vehement dispute. I soon ascertained that they reproached our leader, in the most violent language, because he had taken our caravan over the finest pasturing ground, which had been trampled under foot by the cattle. Kara-gös was quite timid and humble in his demeanour towards these Koords, and directed that the column should strike out in another direction, this deviation brought us over the ridge to the eastern declivity, rising from the plain of Topra-Kaleh.

We were surrounded by splendid pastures, the ground was covered with Alpine flowers, and to the southward the eye dwelt in the summits of the Saiban-Dagh, rising above the great Lake of Van. This mountain is, probably, the highest in Armenia, after Ararat; it was covered with a thick mantle of snow, and ap-

pears to be an extinct volcano. We now encountered the first trees that we had seen since leaving Erzeroum, consisting of prateas, willow-leaved pear trees, and birches.

Kara-gös decreed, that the following day should be a day of rest, as he had two sick horses, of which one died in the course of the morning. The following morning, shortly after the departure of the caravan, he directed the head of the other sick horse to be cut off, and laid by the road side, as an offering to God, to protect the caravan against all accidents. To the same end Kara-gös ordered two lambs, that he had bought from the Koords, to be slaughtered. The roasted meat was distributed among the caravan drivers, without any reference to creed.

The Armenians are one of the most superstitious races on earth. During my wanderings in Persian and Turkish Armenia, many anecdotes, occasionally of a very humorous description, were related to me, showing an extraordinary love of the mysterious, and an anomalous degree of credulity, in a people endowed with so much natural sense and penetration, and which can only be accounted

for, by the total want of schools, and of all education. Priestly tricks are as easy as child's play, amongst a people so inclined to the marvellous, and so governed by superstition; and it is the interest of the monks to impede the introduction of books, and the dissemination of learning, which has been so zealously advanced by the Mechitarist party, in Armenia.

On the second day, the number of our Koordish visitors, was considerably on the increase. There is a great diversity of type and costume amongst these mountaineers. They have even fewer national characteristics than the Kabyles of the Atlas, and there is abundant evidence that a great mixture has taken place in the Koordish blood and language, the latter consisting of a medley of Turkish, Persian, and Arabic words. Nevertheless, we observed some elegant figures, and noble Oriental faces, by the side of others with most ungainly figures, and uncouth features, presenting specimens of monstrous noses, reminding me of the nomadic Yezidees, on the lake of Gocktschai. There was an equal diversity in costume. Some wore plain turbans, others had

a number of variegated cloths, of all possible colours, bound round their grey fur caps. Others, again, wore only these grey fur caps. They appeared to have a general partiality for gaudy colours. Some were dressed cap-a-pie, in fiery red, with very full trousers.

Amongst these Koords, were two important chieftains, whose authority was acknowledged by all the Koordish hordes of these mountains. They asked the cawass to give them a written attestation, that the caravan had passed the mountains without being troubled by thieves. The cawass and Caravan-Baschi seemed not quite free from suspicions, and refused to give the voucher before the following morning, which induced the Koordish chiefs to pass the night in our encampment. In the course of the evening, we had a tremendous storm, with a hurricane, which threw down our tents, whilst we were soaked to the bones by torrents of rain that accompanied it. The storm moved on eastward, the heavy clouds split over our heads, and a bright beam of light irradiated our pasturing horses, who had congregated together in a large group, during the height of the tempest, and began

now to frolic joyfully and saucily over the dewy meadows. The tempest appeared to vent all its fury on the heights of Ararat. The colossal white pyramid was shrouded by pitchy clouds, and brilliant flashes illumined the silver peak of the mountain of the flood. During ten years of travel in highland countries, I have seldom witnessed a tempest scene of such magnificence.

On the 24th June, the caravan moved over the table-land of Topra-Kaleh, also known by the name of Alischgehr. The danger of Koordish attacks was over, nor did our cawass hesitate any longer to give the chieftains their voucher. The plateaux of Pasin and Topra-Kaleh, are separated by a ridge running north and south, and the plain of Topra-Kaleh is watered by a number of artificial canals, like that of Erzeroum, yielding a luxuriant crop of grass. We encamped near the village of Koschian, of which the population is half Koordish and half Armenian. But Turkish is the common vehicle of linguistic intercourse, although the Koordish tongue begins to predominate in many of the neighbouring villages, whereas Armenian is decidedly

distanced by both the former idioms, and is only given the preference in these places, which possess Armenian convents and pilgrimages.

At this place, Kora-gös, bought from the Koords, a sturdy young cob, for which he paid 560 Turkish piastres. The Koordish breed of horses, is inferior to the Persian in beauty, harmony of form and elegant action, nor can it be compared with the Turcoman breed, for size and strength. In Russian Armenia, the green plateaux of Karabagh and the vicinity of Gumri, produce a finer breed of horses. Much less can the Koordish be compared with the Arab steed, the pride and ambition of all Eastern chieftains. Nevertheless, the Koordish breed has many good qualities. They are fiery, swift, docile, and like almost all Oriental horses of a gentle temper, without a vestige of those vicious tricks which are peculiar to the horses of the American Pampas, and of the Russian steppes. The Koordish horses have, moreover, that peculiar, easy, Oriental pace, which is so painfully missed when you are afterwards mounted on European horses, and

especially on Cossack stallions. I was told by eye-witnesses, that in the last Persian campaign, the Koordish cavalry always overtook the Cossacks in a short run. But during a pursuit, lasting for a day, the Oriental horses lost breath, and were invariably caught by the steady pace of the Cossack horses.

Accompanied by the Turkish cawass, and by my Polish servant, I made an excursion to the town of Hassan-Kaleh, which is situated six miles from the caravan-road. I found that it was a dismal, inconceivably wretched and dilapidated hole. Seven-eighths of the houses were in ruins, and had been deserted by their inhabitants. The citadel stands, overhanging the town, on a limestone rock; its walls are in a most dilapidated condition. Topra-Kaleh contains nothing worthy of note, save a Christian church, with the grave of an Armenian saint, and a mosque. The population, which live huddled together, consist, for the most part, of Armenians; and the Bey, or governor residing here, is a Koord by birth, and son of the Pacha of Bajasid. To my inquiries respecting the awful desolation of the place, I received the usual answer: that the town has

fallen into decay only since the last occupation by the Russians. All the thriving Armenian families of the place had followed the Russian army across the Araxes, and emigrated. We could not obtain even bread or rice for ready money at Topra-Kaleh. The people offered us, however, some jasurt, with raw barley floating in it, and the cawass strove to reconcile me to our bad fare, by the intelligence that brandy was to be had in a neighbouring booth, I gave him leave to drink as much as he listed, at my expense, and the Turk, thanking me, proceeded to empty no less than eight good-sized glasses. He was not in the least intoxicated by the draught, only slightly exhilarated, and talkative, and merry, nor have I ever met such a capacity for imbibing, even among the Tchernomorski Cossacks, so that I am forced to award the palm to the cawass, as the greatest hero of the bottle, that I have ever known, in three hemispheres.

On the 25th of June, we marched four hours farther over the plateau, and encamped on a stream, called by the Armenians, Boschögen-su, a tributary of the Murad-tschai. The country was richly adorned with beautiful plants, and

though the grass was not more luxuriant than in our German meadows, it was much thicker than in the plateau of Erzeroum and Hassan-Kaleh, because of the superior system of irrigation here. Nevertheless, it is quite a problem, why, in a country covered with snow seven months in the year, and watered with heavy showers in summer, artificial irrigation should be required to produce a degree of productiveness, falling short of that in the fine Swiss pastures.

The mountains at the south of the plain had still a thick covering of snow. To the north, the summits appeared less elevated, and we had lost sight of Ararat. I caught a good number of trout this day; the weather was fine and clear, with beautiful moonlight nights, and we were surrounded with a large society of cuckoos.

The following day, we approached the end of the plateau, forming a valley, and we bivouacked near the village of Kara-Kilissa, with a miserable church. On the 27th of June, we reached the end of the plateau, and pitched our tents near the Eastern Euphrates. The next day we marched for some hours

through the valley of the Murad-tschai, here a very rapid stream, thirty feet broad.

Two miles from our bivouac was the Armenian village of Utsch-Kilissa,* with a celebrated convent and church, which the Armenians believe to contain the bones of St. John the Baptist, thus entering into competition with the Cathedral of St. Lorenzo, at Genoa, which also lays claim to the same honour. This is one of the most venerated and frequented pilgrimages in all Asia, and those pilgrims who have recited their prayers, heard mass, and made offerings at this shrine, enjoy even greater credit, on their return home, than those devotees who have visited the more celebrated, but also more accessible shrine of Etchmiazin, and have been satisfied with touching the relics of St. Gregory the Enlightener. It is, probable, that the dangers of encountering Koords by the way, enhance the merit of a visit to Utsch-Kilissa.

Scarcely was the caravan encamped, ere the Bishop of Utsch-Kilissa rode out to meet and greet us, attended by his ecclesiastics, here called Kara-basch, *i. e.*, black heads, on account of

* Three churches.

their black cowls. They were all well armed, and they greeted us by firing a salute. This solemn greeting was owing to the presence of Kara-gös, who never passed the place without piously attending mass, kissing the relics, and leaving a handsome present for the priests. After a mutual welcome, the venerable Bishop Sahach, condescended to notice me, and invited me to visit his sanctuary, though he perceived at once that I was a heretic of the English Church. I immediately accepted his invitation, and followed the cavalier clergy over a bridge with two arches, spanning the angry tide of the Murad-tschai, and in a dilapidated condition.

The legend relates that this convent is one of the four sanctuaries founded in Armenia, by St. Narses Magnus, grandson of St. Gregory, the Enlightener. Formerly there were two other churches in the neighbourhood, which tradition reports to have been destroyed by the Koords or Turks. The ignorant monks could not give me much information relating to the age and history of this sanctuary. Even the Bishop was a man of contracted mind, not more dignified or civilized than the monks of the Sewaan island, in Lake Gocktschai, whose

institutions and habits I have described in my work on Russian Armenia. Their indifference and ignorance about the annals of their convent is enough to show the degraded state of the clergy. Every traveller seems to have been regaled with a different version by them. The date of its foundation fluctuates from 306 to 288 in their accounts, nor do they appeal to any documents for proof. Even the origin of the name was a matter of dispute with the Bishop, who admitted that two other churches destroyed in the Turco-Persian wars, used to stand near, but he could not specify the particulars, only adding that it was a very long time ago. The present convent is a very poor place, and pays the Pacha a yearly tribute of two hundred silver roubles. Surg-Ohannes, St. John, is the clerical name of the edifice, which has rather an imposing appearance, amidst the misery of the surrounding villages, but at Tiflis or Constantinople, it would be shorn of a good deal of its splendour. As this convent has been minutely described by previous travellers, we shall, as usual, avoid going over the same ground, only adding a few words to complete what they have said. The church

consists of a nave, resting on sixteen columns. To the right is a side nave filled with monuments, to the left the grave of St. Stephen. In the back ground, to the left, is the chapel of that saint, and to the right, is the chapel and grave of St. John the Baptist. On entering this church, the spectator is struck with its lowness, extent and darkness. A priest lighted some tapers in the main altar, in the centre, but their dim light scarcely admitted of our distinguishing surrounding objects. The pious ecclesiastic hastened to lock up the present I made for this lighting of tapers, without awaiting the *douceur* expected at the door. Over the chief altar is placed a picture of the Madonna, with the Saviour resting on her lap.

It is singular that no traveller has spoken of the large painted figures, on the walls, representing the likenesses of saints, with disproportionally large heads, and deformed bodies. Conspicuous among them is St. George, the Dragon slayer, a colossal figure with misshapen limbs. By his side is another mail clad knight, of the size of life. The cuirass worn by him resembles the armour

of our Middle Ages. These paintings must either be very old, or painted with very bad colours on a bad ground, for a large part of them is erased, or has fallen from the walls.

The convent of Utsch-Kilissa is, to a certain extent, still under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchal See of Etchmiazin, but the influence of the Catholic and High Armenian clergy, has diminished since they no longer reside in Moslem ground. The seven senior Padres travel once a year to Etchmiazin, and carrying bread, butter and cheese as presents, bring back myrrhon or consecrated oil, in return. Only a small part of the produce, and dues of the church-lands of Utsch-Kilissa finds its way now to head-quarters. The finances of the convent have materially improved of late, owing to the greater security of the country, which has occasioned a much greater affluence of pilgrims, some of whom come even from the Don. The convent has been repeatedly plundered by Koords, Turks and Persians; the last onslaught was made by the Koords in 1828.

The bones of the saint have frequently

changed residence at an earlier period, and according to the researches of Petermann, the Evangelist John is named as the first distributor of these relics. He gave the residue of the Baptist's remains to his disciple Polycarp of Smyrna, who preserved them at Ephesus. Firmilianus brought them thence to Cæsarea in Cappadocia, where his teacher Origen, filled the place of bishop, during the persecution of the Christians under Decius, A.D. 251. The relics remained at Cæsarea, till the visit of Gregory the Enlightener, who begged the Patriarch Leontes of Cæsarea to give them to him. After some resistance, the latter gave Gregory part of the relics, only retaining a small portion of them. But the inhabitants of Cæsarea rebelled in consequence of his liberality, and were only subdued by the firm resistance of the Governor.

St. Gregory wandered on with the bones to Innaknean; at that period the head-quarters of idolatry in Armenia, containing two celebrated altars with idols. The Saint concealed the relics in a vineyard near Musch, and during a certain night the spot was lighted up with a supernatural splendour. The idolaters were vanquished in two battles, their altars were

destroyed, and a chapel was built on their site, in which some of the bones of the Saint were deposited. Petermann's researches led him to conclude that this occurred on September the 12th, 302; but we are not referred to the Armenian authorities that establish this date. A convent in Musch received a small portion of the bones, and the name of Howhanna-wankh resulting from it. The remainder were deposited at Utsch-Kilissa; but the relics, which are perhaps not genuine, have suffered much injury from the wrecks and ravages of war, having dwindled to two hands bound in brass, and exposed on the monument of the Baptist.

The little village near the convent is inhabited partly by Armenians, and partly by a population of uncertain nationality, called Tere-Kameh, and presenting much analogy to gypsies. The Tere-Kameh, who occur in various valleys of Armenia, proceeded originally from the Turcoman desert, and speak a Turkish dialect, differing considerably from the Stamboul idiom. Some travellers have confounded them with the Yezidees. The monks employ them as servants and day labourers, in guarding their flocks and tilling their lands.

It is evident, at the first glance, that the friars of Utsch-Kilissa are just as ignorant and benighted as the monks of the Sawan island, in Lake Gocktschai, and as the Gregorian-Armenian clergy generally. Gross ignorance, stupidity, suspiciousness of Europeans, covetousness and immorality, are the predominant characteristics of these ecclesiastics. They are totally unacquainted with the culture of the sciences, music, and the arts, which embellish even monastic life in the West. They avoid all reading, and know their prayer-books by heart. The convent library scarcely contains one hundred dusty, worm-eaten books, that are never touched. Consul Brandt, of Erzeroum, who asked to see it, found in it a Moses of Chorene, with a Latin translation. The prior showed it to him as a foreign book, which he did not understand. Not only was he ignorant of Latin, but he did not appear even to comprehend old Armenian. These monks, who are mean, humble, officious, and cringing to Europeans of high rank, are arrogant, domineering, hard-hearted, and miserly to their flock, and especially to their poorer brethren. They readily assume an external show of virtue and self-denial,

whilst, in secret, they indulge freely in vice, as we were informed by persons who had known them intimately for many years. Envy and jealousy reign supreme amongst them. They do not appear to have a shadow of brotherly or neighbourly love, or of kindness and courtesy in the Christian acceptation of those terms. All who have attempted, like the French, Swiss, and American missionaries, to live on a familiar footing with them, have ended by turning away from them in the utmost disgust.

The caravan started at an early hour on the 29th of June. Kara-gös, and most of the Kadirtschis, staid behind in the convent to hear morning mass, and perform their devotions. They only overtook us in the evening. We pitched our tents four miles this side of Diadin, on the right bank of the river Murad-tschai. From this spot, the great Ararat was presented, in all his majesty and splendour, towering like a giant above the lower mountains, towards the end of the Agri-Dagh chain. The mighty pile was enveloped during the first faint blush of dawn by a slight mist, and only exhibited its colossal outline. About noon, the mountain stood out before us in all his glory, mantled with his

eternal snows. The icy cuirass appears to descend lower down on the south than on the north side, near Erivan. At this period of the year, the lowest border of ice and snow is scarcely 7000 feet above the sea. The silver mantle is broken by dark ribs of rock, till you arrive at an elevation of 10,000 feet; and it is only after passing above this region that you encounter the pure and spotless sheet, intersected by small glaciers. The view of Ararat on this side appeared to me far sublimer than that obtained from the plain of the Araxes. This celebrated mountain, which I had visited the year before, on the Russian side, rivetted my eyes, nor was I ever weary of gazing at it through the telescope. The mountain presents the most diversified aspects, according to the spot whence you view it. On this side, it offers the appearance of a tolerably regular cone, whereas, viewed from Etchmiazin, it has the aspect of an irregular, massive pile, with a very broad summit. The Little Ararat was almost unencumbered with snow, and, notwithstanding its elevation of 12,000 feet, it was completely eclipsed by its gigantic neighbour.

On the following morning, I directed my

horse to be saddled an hour before the departure of the caravan, and rode over to Diadin, escorted by the Turkish cawass and my interpreter. Our path was illumined by the beams of the moon. We reached the wretched little place before dawn; and long ere we arrived, our approach elicited the loud baying of the dogs, who were silenced by the halloo of the Koordish herdsmen. This country is far from secure, being haunted by large and small bands of Koordish banditti, who, after committing their depredations, retire to the border mountains, on the Russian ground, near Ararat, or to Persia. This circumstance renders the people of Diadin distrustful and vigilant. After the cawass had exchanged a few words with the Koords, the latter led us to the Serai, a ruinous place, the residence of the Turkish Beg, Abdul-Rizak, brother of the Pacha of Bajasid. Diadin is one of the dreariest Koordish nests I visited; its castle is attributed to the Genoese, and most of its houses are in ruins. It is said to stand on the site of an ancient and important Armenian city, named Zahrawan; but, at present, it is only occupied by a few hundred Koords, with a sprinkling of Armenians. Diadin is, however,

a place of importance to the caravans in winter, as they generally obtain provisions, and an escort here, if required. It is only the larger caravans of one hundred muskets that venture farther into the mountains without a guard.

I obtained some refreshment at the house of an Armenian, who, in dress, tongue and manners, was more like a Koord than anything else. He stated that all his brethren, at Diadin, had migrated into Russia, where they were thriving, and on comparing the misery of these half-savage Christians, with the security and protection of Russian Armenia, I thought the lot of his comrades almost preferable, notwithstanding the oppression of the Russian employés.

The Eastern Euphrates or Murad-tschai, rises in the green slopes of Ala-Dagh near Diadin, where the Haidemanli Koords dwell. The sources of this river have never been properly explored, but the journey would be attended with considerable danger, owing to the Koords of this district, who are reckoned very poor, savage and inhospitable, though they have become rather tamer since the campaign of Omar Pacha.

The caravan made a very short journey this day, not venturing to encamp far from Diadin, on account of the robbers. The Seraskier of Erzeroum has made the Bey of Diadin answerable for all damages inflicted on travellers, but the influence of the latter is chiefly dependant on the superiority of the Turkish pastures over the Russian and Persian cattle runs. I wished to make an excursion to Ala-Dagh, but was deterred by the representations of the cawass, and resolved, therefore, to visit Bajasid instead, and to rejoin the caravan at the frontier. The cawass, who accompanied me, claimed an escort from Abdur-Rizak, and we started, a body of ten well armed horsemen. It is worthy of note, that this place is remarkable for a very large breed of beautiful greyhounds of Persian race, with yellow skin and pendant ears. The inhabitants keep them partly for their own domestic pleasure, partly for the chace. Hares, jackals and foxes, are chiefly hunted with greyhounds in this country. It is usual for a horseman to proceed with a couple of greyhounds, into the plain to search after game. As these greyhounds have not the fine scent of other hounds, the

hunter must commonly look for the game himself, and if he sees a jackal or hare unable to find cover in the plain, he gives spur to his steed, darting in the direction of the game. The dogs discovering by this, what they have to do, commonly overtake the victim very speedily, with their long legs. It is reckoned, that a Persian greyhound, at full speed, clears 28 miles (7 German miles) in an hour.

We advanced through a narrow rocky valley, watered by the turbulent current of the Murad-tschai. The pass gradually widens to the south, as you approach Ararat; but it cannot be compared in size to the great Araxes plain, beyond the Agri-Dagh. As we approached Bajasid, the evidence of volcanic action, became continually more apparent, till, at length, the whole country presented wonderful vestiges of the operation of subterranean fire, but our limits forbid a minute analysis of its geological formation.

We had left Diadin about 9 o'clock, A.M. In the plain, we experienced a scorching heat; the soil was dry and arid, not a village or a house was to be seen, between Diadin and Bajasid, or scarcely a human being, in fact, the

whole region appears accursed, and presents the appearance of an inhospitable waste. No person ventures alone through this district, even if armed to the teeth. Nothing but the escort of Koords, affords you any protection, as these robbers stand in awe of blood-feuds, nor do they willingly fight with their countrymen, even if they be not clansmen. I admit that the escorts provided by the Pachas and Beys, consist generally of the greatest rascals, and that they have a most cut-throat and thievish appearance. Their faces have no decided type, but much character and decision, and being bronzed by exposure to the sun and weather, they present a very wild appearance. Their weapons vary considerably, consisting usually of a bamboo lance, eight to nine feet in length, a thick double-edged dagger, a very curved sabre and a bad firelock, with a rude flint lock. The traveller may always confide in his Koordish escort, unless the Pacha or Bey have directed them secretly, to strip or slay him. This was the fate of the unhappy archæologist, Schulz, whose escort had received private instructions, from some villanous chieftain, to murder the poor traveller, who

was thought to have many valuables. Joubert, an envoy of Napoleon, was exposed to the same mischance, being betrayed by a ruthless Koordish Pacha of Bajasid, named Mahmoud, who was nominally subject to the Porte, but who harrassed and ruined the district, almost *à discretion*. Joubert wishing to avoid his clutches, stole across the mountains, but he was kidnapped by a chief of the Sibki-Koords, and handed over to Mahmoud, who cast the poor envoy into a damp underground prison. It is probable that the Pacha would have put him secretly to death, to appropriate the presents of Napoleon, had not the plague swept him off. Meanwhile, the unlucky captive gained time, and eventually, his freedom, through the pity of the wife of his keeper. Some persons have thought that Joubert gave an exaggerated account of his sufferings, but I have visited those dungeons, and can substantiate his veracity. The neighbourhood of the Russians has considerably broken the power of the Koords, who have learnt to tremble before the Seraskier of Erzeroum and the Consuls, and a tolerable degree of

security, reigns at present, in this desolate district.

We occasionally passed some solitary Koords, looking out from certain stations, who were pointed out to me as spies, but the sight of the cawass and our escort, deterred them from all attempts. Four miles from Bajasid we encountered a troop of Koordish horsemen, armed with bamboo lances, and bad muskets. They looked very suspicious and forbidding, and our escort informed us that they were notorious robbers. As we equalled them in numbers, and were superior in appointments, and carried no baggage with us, they gave us no trouble. The Koords do not readily venture an attack, unless tolerably sure of success. The strangers exchanged a few words with our escort in the Koordish tongue, directing their hawk's eyes fixedly upon us, and after we had left them at some distance, one of our men told us that the robbers had asked about the encampment of the caravan, and they evidently followed its direction, in order to steal some horses by night.

Bajasid is picturesquely situated, its houses rising in an amphitheatre on the slopes of the Ala-

Dagh. The streets are steep. Some taper minarets and mosques rise conspicuously above the houses. The old castle stands on rocks of most bizarre formation and colouring, and of the most fantastic and singular appearance.

To the west of Bajasid, stood once the old Armenian town of Pakoran, a colony of slaves, and a receptacle for cut-throats and rascals. In fact, this region appears to have always harboured a nest of villains. Bajasid is now a wretched and dilapidated town, not having one sound house in ten, on the average. The population is very miserable, but it has retained the wild Koordish character. Even the Armenians, who are much reduced since the Exodus to Russia, are quite Koords in dress, manners, and tongue. They form one-fourth of the population, which does not number more than four hundred families. Behlül Pacha, at that time its governor, had left the castle, which was almost ruined by an earthquake (1840), and lived in a modest house. He obtained quarters for me at the house of a wealthy Armenian, who entertained me tolerably well, but observed very frankly:—that he had housed all distinguished European travellers to Bajasid, and that he hoped I should

not fall short of them in generosity. Love of lucre seemed his ruling passion, nor could he wait for my taking leave, in order to press me for backshish.

Meanwhile the cawasses came to fetch me, and escort me to visit their lord, who was in the act of adorning himself with brilliants when I arrived. He was seated on his divan, surrounded by Turks and Koordish chiefs. The whole audience-chamber was filled with armed men, including some moustachioed Koords of really terrible aspect, who might have stood models for Salvator Rosa.

Behlül Pacha was an insignificant thin man of fifty, lacking Turkish grandeur and Oriental tact, even observable in Koords. After examining my firman and papers, he expressed his readiness to assist me in any way that lay in his power. He answered for my security in his Pachalik; but he cautioned me against going alone, even in the town, for there was a whole host of bad characters infesting this district. As he said this, I could not avoid casting a glance at the wild figures and forbidding faces surrounding us. Their black eyes were riveted on me and on my Pole, who was seated beside me as interpreter.

Behlül Pacha was very communicative, and related in Turkish, which he spoke with a Koordish accent, that his father Mahmoud, had made many attempts to reach the summit of Ararat, but the most daring Koords had never effected it. He said that they were always seized, at a certain height, with giddiness and sickness, the effects of "bad air." He would not hear of its having been ascended by Russian travellers.

The deserted palace of Bajasid is one of the handsomest in the Turkish empire, and surpassing in solidity the palaces of Stamboul. Even in its present ruinous condition, it offers quite a royal appearance, with its cupolas, columns, and walls of white marble, on which the town is built.

We wandered, with admiration, through its splendid apartments, still showing the abundant vestiges of former magnificence. The architect was a Persian, and the decorations testified the delicate handywork of Persian art. Close at hand is a mosque, with a high minaret and a dome, which, by a singular accident, had not suffered even a rent from

the earthquake. A lofty and elegant marble mausoleum adorns the court, containing the remains of Mahmoud in a coffin placed in the vaults underneath, inclosed by four handsome alabaster tablets, with inscriptions from the Koran. An aged Mollah sat near the tomb, reading aloud from the Koran. He did not seem at all surprised at my appearance, cast an indifferent look at me, stretched out his withered hand, and asked for backshish in an authoritative tone. Nor did he appear quite satisfied with a piece of five piastres. The people told me that the old Mollah lingered there the whole day, praying for the soul of Mahmoud, and we may readily admit that the old criminal required intercessions, after the many crimes he had committed. Behlül Pacha cannot be denied a fair share of filial piety, as he pays the old Mollah for his devotion, notwithstanding his straightened finances.

Though the castle is tolerably strong, it offered no effectual resistance to the Russians in 1828. Behlül Pacha had been removed from his post in consequence, but he was soon

recalled, as the Porte discovered that it required a chief of Koordish blood to manage the Koords. We visited the numerous and ruinous works surrounding the citadel, which had dismal, damp dungeons underneath many of them. We attempted to ascend some of the terraces, but were deterred by the dilapidated condition of the walls. Notwithstanding its strong position, Bajasid seems deplorably deficient in military defences in a respectable state of preservation, though it is the only antagonistic position to the Great Russian fortress near Erivan, and the only protection of the caravan road from Erzeroum to Persia.

The Murad-tschai rises in this vicinity, running in a north and south-west direction ; it flows one hundred and eleven versts through the Pachalik ; its banks are bare, and its current moderately rapid. It becomes navigable in the Sandschakat of Malergherd. The country surrounding Bajasid is well irrigated, and though deficient in timber, offers fine crops of grass. The climate of Bajasid is cool, though so near the hot plains of Persia. Its situation is so healthy,

that the population look the very picture of health, though visited every year by the plague, owing to the carelessness of the inhabitants, whilst the cleanliness of the neighbouring Persians prevents its spread. The Russians attribute curative virtues to henna, rubbed over the hands.

CHAPTER IV.

Departure from Bajasid — The Pass of Khasi-Göl — An Adventure with Koordish Robbers—Entrance into Persia —Gorawa—The Table Land and Town of Choi—Arrival at Lake Urmia—Scenery—Arrival at Tabris—Situation and description of the City—Life of the Inhabitants—Persian Women—A Persian School —The Bazaar—Sociability — Nestorian Women—Temporary Marriages.

I LEFT Bajasid on the 2nd of July, escorted by three Koordish horsemen, who were in the service of the Pacha, and being known to the robbers of the vicinity, were a sufficient security. I overtook our caravan at the top of the Pass of Khasi-Göl, *i. e.*, the Fox's Source, so called from the number of those animals, and jackals. The column had stopped there since the morning, and had encountered an adventure that had stirred up the bile of Karagös, though it was difficult to keep one's coun-

tenance on hearing the narrative, which ran as follows :

At the moment when the caravan reached the top of the Pass, the Koordish robbers managed to carry off some of the pack-horses, notwithstanding the precautions of the kadir-tschis and drivers. The Armenian riding nearest to the caravan, did not dare to fire at them, for fear of blood feuds, for the death of one Koord would have led to an attack from the whole clan. But by firing in the air, the watch called up all the armed Armenians, and after some consultation, Kara-gös resolved to send two drivers, who understood Koordish, well-mounted, but unarmed, to induce the robbers, by threats or promises, to give up their spoil. The two men, capitally mounted, flew like the wind over the misty slopes to the highest plateau, above where the Koords were supposed to be. After the delay of an hour, passed in anxious expectation, they were seen coming back, with dejected looks, on foot, and stripped to the shirt. They had fallen into the hands of a band of Koords, who haunted this district, and who, passing most of their time over the Persian border, set the authority of Behlül

Pacha at defiance. The caravan Bashi sent the same day to Bajasid, to complain of the theft, and determined to lay the case before the Persian chiefs of Kilissa-kent, and Choi. Though these dignitaries had not a large force under them, the Koords were discreet enough to avoid exciting the animadversions of their superiors, and to push matters to extremities, and I ascertained that he recovered the best part of the spoil.

Our encampment was in a very solitary position, the barometer showing an elevation of 7240 feet. There was not a trace of agriculture, and the crop of grass was very meagre. Our goods and horses were brought close together, and carefully guarded. The appearance of a single Koord among the rocks, excited general consternation, as he was regarded as a robber's scout. Our Armenians discharged their pieces frequently during the night, to show the Koords they were on the watch. The Lasian drivers, who appeared more collected, saved up their powder, and I placed my only confidence in these people and in the Turks. However, the night passed over without an adventure, and we started by broad daylight.

The eastern declivity of the Khasi-Göl pass, descends rather abruptly into the Persian territory, but it appears as green and fruitful as the Turkish side. This part of the border between the two empires, consists almost entirely of pasture land. But this results chiefly from the elevation, and not from intentional devastation. We encamped about noon near Kilissa-kent, in a high valley, forming one of the first approaches to the highlands of Persian Armenia. The scenery is rendered lively by the presence of numerous villages, and black Koordish tents; and the national costume here changes suddenly. Pointed lambskin caps, and Persian kaftans, with pendant sleeves, take the place of the Turkish attire. On the 4th of July, we proceeded through narrow valleys, and bivouacked on a table-land, which, though less extensive and irrigated than the plateaux of Turkish Armenia, was covered with villages, corn fields and meadows. A system of partial irrigation diminishes the natural aridity of the soil. I was not a little surprised at the improvement in husbandry, in passing the border. The books of European travellers represent Persia as presenting a much

more desolate and depopulated appearance, even than Asiatic Turkey. These observations do not seem applicable to the province of Aserbeidschan, and especially the border districts on this side. Save the salt marshes to the south of Lake Urmia, I found that the Persian landscapes of this vicinity offered, in general, a much more industriously and carefully cultivated appearance than those of the Turkish territory. The first appearance of Persia is decidedly prepossessing, especially on this border. Most of the frontier districts, on the Turkish side, even near the caravan roads, are a howling wilderness, the lair of wild beasts, and the repair of Koordish robbers. The first Persian villages, certainly, appeared rather indigent, but they were embowered in verdure, in gardens and trees. Greater courtesy in the natives is said to accompany this improvement in husbandry. Turkish is, however, still the prevalent language here, as throughout Aserbeidschan. We met this day a caravan of laden dromedaries, which never make long journeys, or cross the Persian frontier. They were remarkably small animals, with a thicker growth of hair, than I have seen elsewhere. A wedding party passed our caravan towards

evening. The horsemen had no fire-arms, but they carried lances ; they curvetted merrily on their beautiful horses, in front of our bivouac, and appeared desirous of giving us a specimen of their skill in equitation.

Security increases also as you advance into Persia ; though we still occasionally saw the black tents of the Koords, who reminded me of the wild, picturesque robber chiefs of Salvator Rosa ; only, instead of the short dagger of the Italian bandit, they had long bamboo lances, and, instead of the pointed lamb-skin calpac, and tame Persian countenance, which I left on the right side of the Dschagatu ; they wore high yellow felt caps, or bulky turbans. Everywhere amongst these tribes I received a hospitable welcome, notwithstanding the thievish propensity which is not unjustly ascribed to them, and as I personally experienced sometime afterwards in the environs of the Koordish town of Bajasid. Our Armenians seemed to have dismissed all anxiety. The Persian chiefs of Salmas and Choi, though unprovided with regulars, appear to have established a better police here, than the Turkish authorities over the border. Armed with a fowling-piece, you

can wander alone through this region with tolerable security.

On the 5th of July, the caravan started at one in the morning, as the heat of the Persian sun at noon was very oppressive. We encamped about dawn, in a valley deficient in grass and water. The next day we passed the large Persian village of Gorawa, and encamped in a valley a short distance to the south-eastward. The neighbourhood of the village was beautifully cultivated, but the people had a miserable, and oppressed appearance. The Persian peasantry are, undeniably, more industrious than the Turkish, and understand agriculture, and the growth of cotton much better; but they are generally more fleeced and ground down by the superior, appointed over them by the Shah, than the Turks by their Pachas and officials. Their condition resembles that of the Fellahs of the Nile Delta. They are obliged to work the entire day, often under a scorching sun, and they only enjoy such a share of their produce as just suffices to keep their families from starving. All the residue falls into the clutches of the landlord, who resides at Teheran, Tabris, or some other great city, and tries to squeeze as

large rents as possible from his tenants, because he never feels secure that a command of the Shah or the Sardar will not deprive him of his possessions. Most of the proprietors had obtained their land through the interest of the Shah's powerful favourite, the Grand Vizier, Hadschi Mizza Agassi ; but they were obliged to secure his patronage by handsome presents, and to wring the last penny from their unfortunate tenants, in order to procure the necessary bribes.

On the 7th July, we reached the eastern end of the valley of Gorawa, which is separated from the plateau of Choi by a diagonal chain. Our lengthy column ascended the pass in measured tread, with an accompanying jingle of bells. After a march of twelve miles, we reached the head of the pass, and encamped near a fountain inclosed by masonry, resembling a marabout chapel in Barbary. About noon, we were visited by a heavy storm, accompanied with hail and torrents of rain. Notwithstanding the moderate elevation of the surrounding hills, the streams poured down their sides in floods, and the brook in the pass soon swelled to formidable dimensions, and though our tents were pitched

at some elevation above its bed, they were soon some inches under water, and our bales of goods were in serious jeopardy. The Armenians darted out of their tents in spite of the pouring rain, which they dread more than snow or cold, to raise barricades of stone to protect their goods. But Kara-gös issued directions for an immediate removal. The horses were soon driven in and loaded, and we removed to the shelter of a hill side, secure against the inroads of torrents, but offering nothing but thistles for the cattle.

The high table land of Choi deserves its name. It consists of a spacious plain, sixty miles in length, and almost equalling that of Erzeroum in dimensions. Its system of natural irrigation, and its natural fertility, are inferior to those of the Armenian highlands, but the ingenuity and industry of the inhabitants, who are almost a match for Englishmen in agriculture and horticulture, amply compensate for other deficiencies. Dams and other artificial channels divert the waters of the streams in all directions, especially near populous villages, and the natural aridity of the plain, is relieved by a series of verdant oases. The gardens and fields yield abundant crops, wherever human industry

succeeds in irrigating the land. But the plain would become a desert without this distribution of water.

The table-land of Choi presents a very inviting appearance to the eye of the European traveller, just arriving from the barren highlands of Armenia. The eye is relieved by the numerous gardens and shrubberies surrounding the different villages like a green curtain, and decorating the little houses with natural verandahs. The sight of this charming foliage gently agitated by a cool breeze after a recent storm, combined with the exhilarating influence of the air, filled our whole party with a happy genial mood, in which the very horses seemed to share, and we all moved on to the town with light and elastic steps. The verdant meadows and artificial rivulets were fringed with silver poplars of large dimensions, which formed also a hedge round the numerous gardens, and in some places thick clumps, which reminded me of the groves in Schleswig-Holstein. The eye was gratified also, by the beauty and diversity of the fruit trees, including apple, pear, apricot, cherry, walnut, and especially mulberry trees. The latter were loaded with large white fruit

exceeding in flavour, any others that I have ever tasted. Mulberries are the most abundant fruit produced and consumed in Aserbeidschan. The black species are smaller, and not so sweet, but larger and more juicy than the white kind, and they are regarded in the larger cities, as the most savoury fruit next to grapes and apricots. No idea of the beauty of the Persian mulberry can be formed in Europe, where the same tree only yields small and indifferent fruit. The contrast is quite as great as that presented by the sour, shrivelled oranges of Hyères, and the golden globes of the groves at Blidah in Algeria. Most European vegetables are raised in the gardens surrounding Choi, which is likewise encompassed by a complete zone of flower-beds, producing a fine crop of roses, for which all Persians have as strong a partiality, as that which they feel for iced condiments. Wheat and barley are the predominant species of cereals in this district.

The town of Choi is almost buried under the growth of the surrounding foliage, and you are scarcely aware of its existence, till you are within the place, which is encompassed by an indifferent mud wall, an effectual protection

against Koordish forays, but absolutely useless against European field-pieces. The town is entered by two gates, and the architecture of the houses presents much analogy to that prevalent in Russian Armenia. The dwellings consist of low houses with mud walls, like those of Erivan, and the streets are unpaved. The two most conspicuous objects of the town are the spacious bazaar, and the Great Caravanserai, consisting of two large square courts, one of which is surrounded with fruit trees and adorned with a fountain. The shops and guest's chambers surrounding this court are spacious and cleanly kept. They answer as quarters to the poor tradesmen and lower classes, whilst the caravan cattle fill the court. The bazaar, which is of very unusual size in proportion to the town, is situated between the two caravanserai courts, and is the whole day full of life and bustle.

Our caravan did not pass through the town, but encamped at the distance of two miles, at a spot deficient in forage. But Kara-gös, and most of the kadertschis and drivers, accompanied me to town for the sake of diversion, and to make purchases in the bazaar. As we passed through the open

market place adjoining it, and advanced, riding through the compact throng of people, with which it was encumbered, the appearance of our Armenians elicited loud jeers and hooting from the rabble. But when the gaping mob caught sight of myself and my Pole, in rather grotesque half European attire, wearing large broad brimmed hats, the shouts and laughter exceeded all measure. Nevertheless, the Persian rabble appeared as cowardly as they were importunate and insolent. The first row of open mouthed bumpkins, who had almost barred our passage, drew back, and closed their lips most respectfully, so soon as I and my servant gave intimations that we were about to ply the lash.

On forming a closer acquaintance with these Persians, in the Caravanserai and bazaar, we found them very obtrusive, yet polite, amiable and complaisant. They are more grasping, even than the Greeks and Armenians, and cunning and rascally besides; but in other respects, they are not unpleasant to deal with, if you treat them like the Lazzaroni of Naples, in a quiet, but decided manner. I entered a cook's shop in the

bazaar, attracted by the savoury smell of roast lamb and pilaf, but the cook who was a rigid Shiite, refused to let me use his dishes, as they ought not to be polluted by the lips of an Infidel. Specimens of this kind of bigotry never occur among the Turkish and Arab Sunnites. Even the Bedouins and Kabyles of Algeria, do not refuse to drink camel's milk out of a glass previously soiled by Christian lips. As this was my first experience of Shiite fanaticism, I resolved to overcome the man's scruples by a volley of violent reproaches. Their effect was magical, his resistance dropped, and he became all humility. The last Russian campaign, in Persia, appears to have wrought a great change in the demeanour of the people, for previous to that event, a European could scarcely have ventured alone, in his national costume, and armed, among the groups in the bazaar. At present, the European Infidel is more respected than the faithful Asiatic, in this part of Persia, as well as in Oriental Turkey. The people are aware of the influence of the Consuls, and that offences against Europeans, are

punished ten times more severely by the Sardars, than those against natives.

I had brought my medicine chest with me to the khân. The entrance to my chamber was beset with a crowd of sick, directly the intelligence had circulated that a Frank hakhim had arrived. The number of ophthalmic patients is frightful at Choi, and throughout Aserbeidschan. Cataract is peculiarly prevalent, and it is probable, that on the average, every tenth person suffers from inflammation of the eyes. Native doctors have shops in the bazaar, but, like prophets, they have no honour in their own country, whereas European doctors are thought infallible by the Persians. All diseases are supposed to be speedily subdued by their pills, and the credulity of my Persian patients, here and elsewhere, was only equalled by their importunity. Cripples in the last stage of decay, to whom I gave some essence of peppermint, in order to get rid of them, went away fully convinced that they would recover youth and health. The native doctors showed me reluctantly their stores of medicine, consisting chiefly of vegetable

preparations. They, also, perform operations more skilfully and successfully than might be imagined. One of them showed me a stone from the bladder, almost as large as an egg, which he said he had cut out of a patient.

Though these Persians speak a corrupt Turkish dialect, and are partly of Tartaro-Turkish origin, their exterior, demeanour, and whole bearing, together with their temperament and character, are widely at variance with those of the Turks of Stamboul and Anatolia. They are tall, large-boned, handsome men, with oval sunburnt faces, approaching much nearer, in expression, to the national type of the race inhabiting the salt steppes of Khorasan, than to the Osmanlis of Armenia. The idiom is the only thing about them that reminds you of Turkey. Costume, manners, and customs are thoroughly Persian, in Aserbeidschan, where the Persian tongue is the universal medium of written intercourse among the higher classes, and is generally taught in the schools. The phlegmatic character and majestic reserve of the Turkish character, are here supplanted by the levity and animation of an obtrusive, complaisant, and inquiring people. On walking

through the halls of the bazaar, I was twice accosted by armourers, who begged me most politely to allow them to examine my fowling-piece and pistols. Though their fire-arms are very different from ours, they understood the mechanism of the latter immediately, and notwithstanding the superior splendour and decoration of the weapons of native manufacture, they immediately recognized the advantages of the European workmanship. In fact, the Persians may be deficient in the inventive genius of the West, but they cannot be denied an astonishing aptitude for imitation; indeed, I heard of surprising instances of this natural characteristic from Europeans, long domiciliated at Tabris.

Choi cannot be numbered among the largest or most splendid cities of the East, but its propinquity to the Russian and Turkish border gives it considerable commercial importance, without mentioning the flourishing smuggling trade carried on with Russian Trans-Caucasia, since the introduction of the new Russian customs. I admit that the display of merchandize in the bazaar of Choi is not nearly so splendid, or varied, as that at Tabris, but very consider-

able, in proportion to the size of the town, and the population of the vicinity. There was a respectable selection of Persian silks, shawls, carpets, peltries, and leather, besides the most usual European articles. The tradesmen in the bazaar, who seldom move from their shops in Turkey, were most pressing here, begging me to inspect their goods. Many of the merchants stopping at the caravanseraï, brought me sundry articles, which they thought calculated to interest me, including Roman and Persian coins, modern coins, with effigies of saints, crosses of artificial gold, cornelian, and agate, on which talismans were engraven, &c. They also tried to make me take some written talismans, in a beautiful character, for which they asked exorbitant sums. Persian greediness showed itself here in a very odious light. Of all the people whom I have ever visited, none appear to attach so much weight to money as the Persians, and this passion appears to increase in intensity in proportion as you advance into the heart of Persia, among the genuine Persians. In fact, though the Turkish element may predominate physically in the people of Aserbeidschan, the Persian element

gives the prevailing colouring to their mental and moral constitution.

A European, travelling as hakhim, has one great advantage, *i. e.*, that he can protect himself against the importunity of his patients. He has only to require payment for his pills and mixtures, and the crowd in his antechamber, notwithstanding their implicit confidence in his healing powers, withdraw in quiet resignation. Even if he were certain of cure, a Persian would not readily part with money.

On the 9th of July, the caravan only advanced four miles, on account of the heat, and encamped at the foot of a range separating the table-land of Choi from the plain, containing Lake Urmia, with its occasionally luxuriant vegetation. I stayed this and the following day at Choi, to study Persian life and manners, as it was quite safe for me to overtake the caravan without an escort. Of all Oriental towns that I know, Erivan has the greatest resemblance to Choi, and the analogy must have been more striking when the former was under Persian rule. Kara-gös lingered here too, to settle the payment of the Persian customs' duties, which

are levied in this border town, amounting to eleven Turkish piastres for every bale. We overtook the caravan in the evening, encamped on the banks of the Abasibu. In the night, we were visited by a heavy thunder-storm and torrents of rain, making it necessary for us to dig channels round our tents, to carry off the water.

When we had reached the head of the pass, our eyes plunged down over the southern slope into the misty plain of the great Lake Urmia, with its six rocky islands. We passed by the villages of Hanadan, Almaserai, and Togdschi, and encamped near Hassan-Köi, situated at the north-west end of the great salt basin. The lake narrows, in this part, into a small arm, like that of Lake Van, on its north side. I candidly confess that I was disappointed at the first view of this celebrated scenery, having been led to anticipate, from the descriptions of previous travellers, that the Persian landscape in this vicinity is much more striking and picturesque. The northern shore of the lake is flat, and rises in a gently inclined plain to the hills. The numerous villages dotting its sur-

face were embowered in rice and wheat-fields, and amidst plantations of cotton and fruit-trees.

On the 11th of July, we advanced thirteen miles along the north bank of the lake, and encamped at the village of Kaftatchmeh, two miles from the lake, which I was able to approach quite close, as there were no marshes here. Opposite our camp, was the rocky island of Schachi, seven miles from the northern bank and rising four to five hundred feet above the dark green mirror of the waters. The island has but little arable land, and a thin population, scattered about in five villages.

To the southward, where the lake is widest, no mountains closed up the prospect, which, save where it was broken by the island, presented a boundless shining plain, of a black tinge, shading into green, in the foreground, and of a dark blue, blending with the sky, at the horizon. To the south-west, however, the eye was relieved by a fine mountain, with snowy summit, whose height, judging from its thick mantle of snow, in this hot season, cannot have been less than 10,000 feet. Nevertheless, the prospect does not present any broken or pic-

turesque rocky peaks. To the westward, a low, monotonous ridge runs parallel to the snowy chain before mentioned; and to the east, a few snowy summits were discernible above the site of Tabris.

The north side of Lake Urmia consists of a large, arid plain, of crescent shape, inclosed by bare mountains, and requiring artificial irrigation to make its salty soil productive, and even habitable. The climate is burning hot here in summer, and rather severe in winter. The plain is sprinkled, at short intervals, with villages, embowered in groves and verdure, forming charming oases, and relieving the dreariness of the prospect. At some distance from the villages, I observed large crops of cotton and wheat, with long, pendant, golden ears. The corn was cut in some places, and the yellow colouring of these crops did not improve the scenery.

In some directions, the crops approach the lake, but wherever there is a large deposit and thick crust of salt, all vegetation ceases. The lake has, undoubtedly, had a much larger extension at a former period. The composition of its bed and banks, and the geological features

of the plain and whole country, are full of interest and novelty, but must be omitted in the present sketch.

In the summer months, when the great salt lake is commonly as quiet as a pond in an English park, a deposit of mud results from the evaporation of the water. The natives describe the lake to be almost as tempestuous as the Euxine in spring. The prevalent colour of the water is blackish blue, in the centre, and at a distance, it appears azure, whereas close at hand it looks green, and almost black, and so dense, that fatty bodies, such as pigs, do not sink in it. According to the chemical analysis of the American Hitchcock, the only man who has decomposed it, the water appears to hold in solution an immense number of ingredients, especially decomposed vegetable matter. This may result from the putrescence of water plants, and marshy slime and mud, as well as from vegetable substances brought down by the torrents.

In some places, this mass of decayed plants, is so great, that it completely stops the swell and breakers at some distance from shore. In many parts, the banks of the lake consist of a deposit of yielding mud, which does not suffer

you to approach the water. This was the case during our march of twelve miles, parallel to the lake, on the 11th of July. I found some very singular tortoises in this vicinity, having a yellow body covered with dark green stripes, whilst the shell was green above, and yellow underneath.

On the 13th of July, we left the lake, and marched east, through a generally parched and arid country. At length, on the 14th of July, we arrived at the great city of Tabris, situated on the same plateau, which embraces the vast salt basin of Lake Urmia, with a circumference of two hundred miles. Our caravan had travelled slowly, being twenty-seven days on the road; but Kara-gös had brought his bales, kadirtschis, drivers, and three hundred and sixty horses safe to their destination. I admit that he had lost six horses, four packs, and the trousers of some of his people at the hands of the Koords, and these sorrows may have occasioned him much bitterness and some grey hairs, but the purse of shining tomans handed him by his Greek employers, soothed his wounded spirit. I met the black-eyed baschi the same evening, and found his dismal features slightly transfigured by the shower of

gold, and an attempt at a smile played on his thin lips.

Tabris, or Tauris, is, at present, the second city in Persia, in dimensions, and the first in population. It is situated in bare, dreary plains, at the foot of lofty, barren, and fantastic mountains, rising precipitately to the east of the town, and almost encroaching on its north-eastern portion. These arid Persian landscapes, with the eccentric shape and coloring of the hills, would be a fine study for those artists who prefer desolate scenery to the verdant declivities of Germany, and the grassy uplands of the Tyrol. Happily, Persian horticulture, and artificial irrigation, have considerably modified this deficiency, and created a kind of small paradise, cast like a blooming garland among the naked rocks, encompassing the town. Tabris is surrounded by many hundred gardens, delighting the inhabitants with their grateful shade and delicious fruit.

Tabris contains sixteen thousand houses, and about one hundred and forty thousand inhabitants. Its streets and dwellings present such a degree of uniformity, that it requires some time for the stranger to become familiar with its

topography. The organ of locality is taxed very severely here, as there are few conspicuous buildings to fix the attention. I adopted the same plan here as in the Merceria of Venice, and by invariably following the most crowded and bustling streets, I always arrived at last in the Square of St. Marc, at Venice, and at the Great Bazaar, in Tabris, which plays a much more important part here, than the Bezestein, at Constantinople, being the centre and focus of all Persian life and business. Immediately after my arrival at the town, I made the acquaintance of some Cossacks, connected with the Russian embassy, and addressing them in Russian, begged them to show me a khan. They accordingly led me to a house, in one of whose dirty rooms, I found a crowd of brandy-drinking Russians, Armenians, and impudent women, who appeared engaged in the celebration of wild orgies.

Utterly disgusted, I left the house, and sent my servant to hire a room in a khan. Meanwhile, I chanced to stroll past a house, bearing the mighty British Lion painted on its wall, and the British ensign floating over the door, showing it to be the British Consulate. Fatigued

with my perambulations, I caused myself to be announced by one of the Persian servants, congregated, according to national custom, around the door. I found the Consul engaged in conversation with Dr. Cassolani, the only European physician at Tabris, and a native of Malta. When I handed over my letter of introduction, and explained my dilemma, Dr. Cassolani offered me a room in his house, in the politest manner. Mr. Bonham seemed also very amiable, but less sociable, and although he had a large house and a very small family, he had the same dislike to any inconvenience and trouble, as his colleague at Erzeroum. I confess that I did not receive a very favourable impression of English hospitality in the East. My letters from Lord Aberdeen and Sir Stratford Canning, did not produce so much effect as might have been anticipated from the position of those statesmen. In Asiatic Russia, far less splendid introductions generally secured me a friendly and really hospitable reception. On nearer acquaintance, I admit that Mr. Bonham lost some of his genuine English stiffness, and his formal character gave way to sallies of good humour. He had married a niece of Sir Robert Peel, a

beautiful and charming person, who had faced the dangers and hardships of the voyage and road, to accompany her husband to Persia. They spent the honeymoon on the stormy waves, and after residing awhile at Tabris, where their union was blessed with a lovely child, they proceeded with the young traveller to India and China, where Mr. Bonham obtained other appointments.

I was comfortably located in the house of Dr. Cassolani, and formed the acquaintance of a great number of Persians of all ranks, who, from noon to dewy eve, besieged the house of the wise hakhim, who had obtained a great reputation by a successful operation on a club foot. Amongst the patients were men of extremely strong constitution, who appeared perfect pictures of health and strength, and yet, who suffered from serious and painful disorders. For instance, one day a wealthy Persian came, of colossal size, and almost bronze complexion, accompanied by many servants, as usual with the opulent Dr. Cassolani looked at him a long time, searchingly, before he addressed him, and said to me in Italian : " This man might serve as model for a Hercules, and

yet I fancy that he has contracted a nervous disease, by excessive indulgence. This is not the first time that such a giant has come to me to seek for a strengthening treatment, that would enable him to continue the gratification of his sensual appetites." The anticipation of the Doctor was perfectly correct. The handsome, powerful Persian, complained of numbness in his hands, and admitted, privately to the Doctor, that he had brought this ailment on himself by excesses, and that they invariably increased after each visit to his well-stocked harem. Ophthalmic patients were, by far, the most numerous. Dr. Cassolani had twice operated successfully in cases of cataract, and his fame spread as far as Teheran, whither he subsequently removed, at the special request of the rheumatic Mahomed Schah.

Including its gardens and suburbs, the city of Tabris is ten miles in circumference, and cannot cover less surface of ground than Vienna or Berlin. Most of the houses have only one story, and consist of the same materials as those of Choi and Erivan, contributing copious additions to the street dust, and to the number of ophthalmic patients. It is well known that the

Persian style of architecture never laid claim to grandeur, like that of the Egyptian, Byzantine, or even Turkish, as exemplified in the mosque of Suleimanieh. But in matters of decoration, the Persian style is often very graceful, and the arabesques that are preserved in some of the splendid palaces of Teheran and Shiraz, and even in a ruinous mosque at Tabris, can scarcely be equalled anywhere in the East ; least of all at Constantinople, especially in the summer palace of the Sultan, on the Bosphorus, the interior decorations of which are as gaudy as they are tasteless. The fairy-like ornaments, and porcelain tiles of the Moorish palaces I saw in Algeria, are inferior to the Persian art in arabesques, painted garlands, and coloured decorations on the walls ; and a Bavarian traveller has observed, that the mural arabesques in the public buildings at Munich, are very inferior to the admirable decorations in the old Sardar's palace at Erivan, now the residence of a Russian colonel. Persian architecture, by no means, appears to the greatest advantage in the exterior of edifices. Persia cannot anywhere offer mosques that can be compared with the Moslem temples of Constantinople, Broussa, or Cairo. But in the inte-

rior, the most profuse decoration is commonly displayed ; and even in the houses of Persians in indifferent circumstances, the rooms present walls with polished tiles, and almost every proprietor in good circumstances has a fruit or flower garden, or, at all events, a court with mulberry trees, under whose shade he can recline on a soft carpet, and enjoy the freshness of the air. The head of the house, after his repast, enjoys his kef, smoking his nargileh, sipping sherbet, listening to the plash of a murmuring fountain, gazing on the voluptuous evolutions of dancing slaves, or reclining, with locked doors, at the side of his favourite, attired in her seductive costume of gold embroidery and variegated silk ; and, at length, overpowered by these combined influences, he lapses into that apathetic contemplation, the highest delight of the Oriental. *

Whosoever has the good luck to be a hakhim, in high repute, like Dr. Cassolani, who is even admitted to make medical visits in the harems of the rich, otherwise closed to all males, save the lord of the house, enjoys many opportunities of gratifying his sight with the spectacle of Persian beauties. Frank ladies

are also admitted into their harems, in the most polite manner, by the Persian grandees. Unfortunately, these mysteries of Persian domestic life at Tabris, remained concealed from us, and I was obliged to rest satisfied with visits to the houses of some merchants, who lived in a plain manner. The walls of their rooms were of shining white, polished, and with frescoes or porcelain. The only luxuries consisted in the divans, the silk cushions and Oriental carpets covering the floor of the room. The hinder part of the house is commonly occupied by the harem. The gardens were neatly kept, presenting a fine display of roses, but no great variety of flowers. I was informed, however, by Dr. Cassolani and Mr. Bonham, who had frequently visited the palace, and even the harem of Behmen-Mirza, Sardar of Tabris, and brother of Mahomed-Shah, that the ornaments and plants were much more splendid and diversified. They represented that the taste of the Persian architects had created really beautiful effects at his residence, and that there was a display of marble and alabaster, of gilding, mosaic, arabesques, and even paintings on glass, that could not have been conceived, from the plain and un-

pretending exterior of the Sardar's palace. The egotistical Persians have withdrawn all beauties from the gaze of the street passenger, reserving them for the enjoyment of the privileged few, who hold high rank and appointments, or have obtained wealth, and occupy a position that renders them secure in the display of their luxury, at least, in the inside of their houses, without being exposed to the ruthless depredations of Viziers and *employés*. In walking through the streets, your eye caught sight of nothing but monotonous ash-grey walls, with a coating of Persian mud mortar, here and there surmounted by the green canopy of giant mulberry and palm trees.

Even the Persian fair, who flock through the streets in almost as great numbers as the men, and who are engaged in visiting baths and female friends, do not display, in the street, the variegated glories of silk and embroidery, with which they delight the eyes of their lords in the harem. They are dressed from head to foot in linen, muslin, or coarse cotton of a uniform colour, only admitting narrow slits for the eyes. The out-door costume of the Turkish and Armenian women at Stamboul,

and even of the Moorish women in Tunis and Algiers, would be regarded as highly indelicate, at Tabris. Notwithstanding their ponderous envelopes, the Moorish women of Barbary suffer their black, piercing eyes to have full play, besides the top of their brunette noses. The Turkish women of Constantinople go still farther, displaying not only their lustrous eyes, but the whole of their pretty nose, only concealing forehead, mouth and chin. Not only do they allow their eyes to wander freely over the magic scenery of the Bosphorus, but they are not very reluctant to display the charms of their features to the promenaders of the masculine gender, by the sweet waters, and under the shade of the palm trees. Nor are their dainty feet so carefully concealed within their slippers, and occasionally a respectable portion of an elegantly shaped leg, may be detected under the folds of the wide trousers. The Christian Armenian women, are almost more amiable and complaisant, in this respect, and display so much of their pretty faces, that you can obtain a tolerably correct notion of Armenian beauty, even in the streets of Pera, and without entering private houses. But in

Tabris a boundless field is left open for fancy. The hundred eyes of Argus, even if provided with a hundred Herschel's telescopes, could not decipher the charms and mysteries, buried under the Persian envelopes. Nothing is seen save mummy-like spectres, having nothing in common with humanity, and looking like so many walking sacks, to which some Persian enchanter had given a pair of feet.

The bazaar is the only place well adapted to the study of Persian life and manners. We ought rather to use the plural term, for the bazaar of Tabris, consists in reality of several bazaars, and forms a conglomerate of numerous halls full of shops. Domestic habits and religious ceremonies, are a sealed book to Europeans, but all public places of resort are thrown freely open to them. The spacious halls of the bazaar, are the centre of all life and movement, presenting a wonderful mixture of art, science, sensual enjoyments, luxury, and misery. I strolled daily through the bazaar, sometimes accompanied by my interpreter, sometimes alone. At first, Dr. Cassolani recommended me to make use of the services of one of his Persian servants, who knew how

to proceed, when the crowd surrounded me with their importunities. If the clamorous and obtrusive tradesmen, or the beggars and jugglers swarming round us, became troublesome, this man cleared a way through the throng, with his herculean arm, and made the most forward stand back, or draw off. Gradually the people became accustomed to my daily stroll, and I was allowed to make my observations in peace.

The first thing that struck me in the bazaar, was the immense accumulation of European goods, compared with those of Asiatic manufacture. More than three fourths of the contents of the shops, proceed from Europe, and chiefly from England. The best cottons and cutlery, were evidently British, whilst the coarser kinds came from Germany and Russia. Almost all the finer glassware, especially used for narghiles, and expressly adorned with fanciful designs, were of Austrian manufacture. The amber used for the mouthpieces of tchibouks throughout Asia, comes chiefly from the Baltic provinces of Prussia, but it is prepared for circulation at Constantinople. Some Bohemian glass blowers at Stamboul,

raised a formidable competition to this trade, by making yellow glass mouth-pieces, that were mistaken for amber. But their consumption was confined to the poorer classes.

The poorest articles on sale came from Bohemia, Saxony, and Russia. I saw a considerable quantity of Nuremberg toys, including watches, with representations of locomotives, and German inscriptions. Even the lithographs of Mahomed-Shah then ruler of Persia, had a German legend. On many coarsely made boxes coming from Astracan, might be seen uncouth likenesses of the Emperor Nicholas. Even the portraits of Benkendorf, Paskiewitsch, and other Russian Generals were offered for sale in the Armenian shops. Almost all the leather and coarse cloths, came from Russia, and the best sugar, (here in great request) from England.

Amongst the most beautiful and elegant Asiatic goods, the handsomest were from Hindoostan, including shawls, carpets and counterpanes. The shawls of less delicate texture, whose splendid colours betray the celebrated Persian taste for beautiful tints and elegant designs, proceed for the most part from the southern provinces of Persia.

Of all the Eastern provinces, Schiraz yields the most solid articles, including, especially, sword blades of remarkable beauty, and very high price. I was shown blades of splendid workmanship, into whose steel, ornaments and arabesques of gold, containing occasionally passages from the Koran, were inserted, and which were valued at 200 tomans, or Persian ducats. I admit that there was no great profusion of such articles in the bazaar of Tabris. For many of the opulent Persians, avoid purchasing them, in order not to betray their wealth, and many artizans avoid the manufacture of such articles, in order not to excite the covetousness of the Sardar, or of some Persian prince, who are often amateurs of curiosities, but seldom punctual paymasters.

Of these Persian weapons, it may be said, in general, that the intrinsic worth of the blade exceeds that of the decorations. Magnificent sheaths, splendid guards of gold, ivory, or precious stones, such as are encountered in the bazaars of Constantinople, Cairo, and Tiflis, as well as in the cities of Barbary, are not, at all, or rarely, in circulation in Persia. The chief attention of the Shiraz manufacturers

is directed to the blade, which is composed of a number of plates of steel, welded together when cold, and requiring a most practised and delicate hand. The artisans of Tabris, Teheran, and Ispahan, have not yet been able to rival the mechanics of Shiraz, who still enjoy the highest reputation in this branch of art. It is rare to meet with arms of other descriptions, such as Arabian yataghans, in Persia, where they seem not to be liked.

The workshops are more interesting than the show-rooms. All trades are carried on in this bazaar, from the coarsest to the finest. It is usual for kindred trades to associate together, and this regulation seems necessary, because some branches could not be carried on near the noisy trades, such as copper-mongers. Nevertheless, the continual cries, the buzz of conversation from the numerous groups, and the constant movement create a perpetual and considerable tumult. I admired particularly the great precision and wonderful strength displayed by the smiths in their strokes. In one workshop, seven men were hammering at copper balances; and Vulcan himself would have

smiled approvingly at the dexterity of these brawny Cyclops of the Persian land of fire.

As a contrast to the latter we may notice the Persian public letter-writers, whom I had already seen in the bazaar of Choi. They carry on almost the same business as the *écrivains publics* of the large towns of France, nor are they better housed or more respected. Any one who wishes to send a petition to a great man, or a man in office (love-letters are at a discount in Persia), and is ignorant of writing, resorts to one of these public quill-drivers. They also draw up talismans and amulets, consisting of extracts from the Koran, written on parchment, in a very superior style of handwriting, decidedly equal to anything we can produce.

Even public schools are situated between these workshops and show-rooms. The Mollah generally instructs his pupils with open doors, and the school-rooms are filled with a hum, reminding you of a swarm of bees. I entered one of these rooms unceremoniously, and saluted the schoolmaster Mollah, who wore a white turban, instead of the usual black kalpak; and he invited me most civilly to sit down beside

him. His pupils, about sixty in number, sat on the carpet, forming an irregular half circle round the Mollah. The majority were boys of ten to twelve years ; but there were a few big lads of seventeen to eighteen, who already boasted some respectable mustachios ; and all came from the country. The scholars read together, half aloud ; but they chatted together quite unreservedly, ran about to each other, exchanged places, and appeared to have no idea of the order and discipline of our European schools. Besides the general reading that was going on, the Mollah carried on individual exercises, calling the youths to him separately, who were obliged to read their manuscripts to him with a perpetual nodding of the head. The very neatly-written leaves of paper handed to his pupils by the master, contained verses of Hafiz and Firdousi, which were read as easily by these humble youths as by the most learned professor at a German university. Turkish writing and books are not read in the schools of the Persians ; indeed few of them seem to know how to read and write Turkish, though the common people speak a corrupt Turkish throughout Aserbeidschan. The usual sum paid for schooling to the Mollah,

is one sahebgeran (ten pence) a month for the wealthier pupils, and an abbas (five pence) for the poor. Besides these, extra presents are made; thus one of the boys gave the master, in my presence, a dozen fine apples.

Musicians, jugglers, conjurors, and story-tellers, contribute not a little to increase the life and animation of the bazaars. There can be no doubt that the bazaar of Constantinople is much more spacious, and has a much more diversified and splendid display of merchandize; but it does not offer the picturesque appearance of that of Tabris, and is much more tranquil and tedious. The jugglers did not exhibit any of the wonders recorded of their craft in India. Nothing that I saw of their performances exceeded the dexterity of our "wizards." Story-tellers in the costume of Dervishes found a ready audience; their narration was animated and impassioned; and they tried to increase the effect of their tale, by mimicry of voice and gesture. In other respects, everything went on much as in the fairs of Germany, and the sea-ports of Italy. All wished to hear and see, and no one to pay; and the collection of performers was commonly very meagre. Musicians commonly took up

their station in the market-place, near the bazaar. When I approached one of these stationary bands, the curious crowd readily made way for me. Two of the musicians put down their instruments, made me a low bow, and, without being asked, but probably in anticipation of a handsome reward, they proceeded to display some grotesque and obscene dances. The dress of the Feringhees is generally more respected in the east, than the kaftan of the Oriental. The crowd show their esteem for them, but make the Feringhees pay three times as much as natives for every complaisance.

The European society of Tabris is almost confined to the members of the Russian and British consulates, and to a few Greek merchants, who have monopolized the European-Persian trade. The British Consul lives rather retired, in the enjoyment of the society of his charming wife. His national shyness, or domestic habits, make him rather unsociable, and the cause is attributed to British egotism. The gentlemen of the Russian embassy were much more amiable, and did all in their power to enliven the European circle, by their courtesy and kindness, as well as good cheer, and thus

to secure some entertainment in this place, which is a very dull residence, notwithstanding its population and bustle.

The same remark applies to the Greek merchants. Through the introduction of friends, I was admitted into their agreeable and exclusive society, for the Europeans of Tabris are rather shy of Frank strangers, and make all sorts of inquiries about their antecedents, ere they admit them into their circle. Russians, English and French are rather common visitors, Germans are rarely seen. The day before my arrival, an Italian, called Foresti, had appeared, who passed for a doctor, and had a seat at the table of M. Morfopulo, the head Greek. This self-styled doctor had been long known in Asiatic Turkey as a quack, as I learnt at Erzeroum, and knowing different languages, he had deceived and overreached different pachas, had prescribed them wonderful cures for all evils, in consideration of a good fee, whilst on other occasions, he had affected a knowledge of mining operations, and promised them fine veins of gold and silver. At length, the quack was unmasked everywhere, and even the heroic stomachs of the mountain Koord Beys could

not endure any longer the violent operation of Foresti's drugs. Kicked out of the door everywhere, he had now come to seek his fortune in Persia. When I came back to Tabris, after a trip to the hills, he had a good practice, consisting mostly of incurables, cast off by Dr. Cassolani, and Foresti thought Persia a fair field for operations, though he allowed that the greedy Persians, including sardar and grandees, were very reluctant to pay.

A dinner at the house of M. Morfopulo, gave me a good insight into the luxurious style of living adopted by Europeans at Tabris. Asiatic delicacies presented a contrast with European dainties. Fish from the Caspian Sea, game from the forests of Gilan, grapes and mulberries from Aserbeidschan, the most delicate pasties, coloured jellies, and iced Cliquot champagne of the best quality, graced the board. The conversation was very entertaining. Amongst the company was a young Greek, M. Mavrocordato, a relation of the celebrated minister of Athens, a man of the most refined French manners, dressed in an elegant French dress-coat, with yellow gloves, and fresh from Paris and its gaieties.

I had a good deal of conversation with old Morfopulo about commercial matters. The trade through Tabris to Central Asia has decreased for some years, but the smuggling trade with Russian Armenia was immensely on the increase, and the profits of the Greek houses were at that time enormous, though subject to fluctuations, owing to political accidents, wars, &c.

The domestic position of the European residents is not without interest. Some of these Greeks were married men, but had left their wives behind at Constantinople. Most of the members of the Russian embassy had also come here as bachelors. In both cases, the new comers had followed a long established practice of Europeans in Persia, and contracted temporary marriages with Nestorian women. The Christian sect of the Nestorians, which is even more numerous than the Gregorian-Armenian, in Aserbeidschan, has a remarkable partiality for Europeans, and its members have not the least scruple, on religious, national, or ethical grounds, to give their daughters in marriage to Europeans, for a limited period, (be it six years or six months,) and for a

stipulated sum. The affair is generally arranged in the most regular and formal manner, always in the presence of the parents and the nearest relations of the girl, and often under the sanction of a Nestorian priest, acting, perhaps, as notary. In fact, there is a complete competition for the preference of every newly arrived European, who is supposed to be about to take up his residence for some time in the country. The wealthiest strangers have naturally the best selection. As soon as they have agreed about the duration, and the terms of these *matrimonie alla carta*, the bride is brought to her husband with due ceremony, by her relations. It is usual for the family of the lady to take up their residence in the house of her temporary lord, who must naturally maintain them all. This arrangement is often expressly stated in the marriage settlement. Not only all the Greek merchants, but most of the members of the Russian General Consulate, were married in this manner, and the practice is so usual and long established, that public morality is not at all shocked at it. The persons concerned ask each other, without the least embarrassment, how their

wives and children are. Each of these gentlemen had set apart a portion of his house for the women, and called it the harem. The ladies retained the mode of life, and costume of native females, covered their faces when strangers appeared, kept away from table when guests were invited, filled up their leisure hours like Turkish women, with devotion to the toilette, and visiting the baths, and when they went abroad, appeared like the other women, in long envelopes, extending from head to foot.

It cannot be disputed that these females are faithful and affectionate to their children, but being totally deficient in cultivation and refinement, notwithstanding their beauty, they cannot compensate for the life of intelligent female society, in Europe. It was evident, from the regrets expressed by the gentlemen, for the tender reminiscences in the West, that these Perso-Frankish weddings did not satisfy the affections and the imagination. Young M. Mavrocordato longed for Parisian grisettes, M. Osserof, for the refined females of the Petersburg salons. The physical beauty of these Nestorian

women, which is quite undeniable, was lost sight of, in comparison with the delicacy and spiritual refinement of the cultivated class of European women.

So soon as the interval, specified in the contract, has elapsed, another agreement is made, unless the gentleman is tired of his partner, when he forms a new one. The deserted lady is sure of a settlement at home, because she brings a good sum with her, whereas most Nestorians have to pay dearly in purchasing a wife. The children, the fruit of these short-lived marriages, almost invariably follow their mothers, and I was told that the Nestorian females love them almost more than those born in subsequent alliances. The step-fathers are, also, said to treat them very kindly. Nor is it less remarkable, that the European fathers are said to feel no scruple in abandoning their offspring, without taking a farther thought about their destiny. A long residence in the East appears to blunt the sense of duty, honour and affection, even in the most upright characters.

My time at Tabris was not so much devoted

to running about the streets, as to intercourse with men familiar with Persian life. I was especially indebted for much useful information to Messrs. Bonham and Ossef, who had resided a long time in the country, and were thoroughly versed in its political state. Combining their accounts with other information received on sundry occasions, relating to modern transactions in Persia, I purpose to present the reader with the fruit of my experience, supported by the testimony of the most able British residents and travellers, the whole digested by the eminent Professor Ritter of Berlin.

CHAPTER V.

Modern Politics of Persia—Tabris—Its Vicissitudes—State of Persia under Feth-Ali-Shah and Abbas Mirza—Results of Conversations about Mohammed Shah—Hussein Khan's Mission to France—French Drill Inspectors—Count of Damas—Characteristics of Mohammed Shah and Hadschi-Mirza-Agassi—The Emperor Nicholas and the Persian Crown Prince—Domestic Scenes—The Russians and their Policy—The English and the French in Persia.

TABRIS or Tauris, was founded by the Armenian King Khosreu, a zealous fire-worshipper, in the first half of the third century. It is evident that we cannot introduce a detailed chronicle of this remarkable city, which has suffered frequent and remarkable vicissitudes, but we may add that its founder and etymology have been matters of dispute, and that the early Arabian geographers devote a considerable share of attention to the city.

It was destroyed in 858 and 1042, by earthquakes, restored under the Moguls, and almost ruined by the Sultan, Amurath IV. In 1673, when visited by Chardin, it had recovered most of its splendour, and was reported to contain 15,000 houses, 15,000 shops, 300 caravanserais, 250 mosques, and 550,000 inhabitants. These numbers appear rather fabulous, and, at all events, the city seems to have been greatly reduced by the end of the eighteenth century. Two terrible earthquakes in 1727 and 1780, contributed in producing this decay. The former of these catastrophes is said to have destroyed 70,000, the latter, 40,000 persons in Tabris alone. Earthquakes are still felt there frequently, the whole country is most volcanic, and it is probable that future convulsions are in store for that city.

At the beginning of the present century, Tabris appears to have been at a very low ebb, only containing dilapidated houses and 30,000 inhabitants, according to Kinneir. Some years later, it appears to have made a sudden leap, and it was found by Morier and Ouseley to present a promising appearance, with a strong citadel. Ark Ali Shah, was restored as a residence by the

young Persian Crown Prince, Abbas Mirza, who had established an arsenal, and a cannon foundry there. The modern development and prosperity of the capital of Aserbeidschan, is so intimately blended with the history of that promising Persian, who died too early for the good of his country, without being able to mature the enlarged projects of reform which he had commenced ; that we cannot avoid giving a sketch of his life and character, extracted from the best accounts of English travellers. Nor could recent political events in Persia, on which we purpose to dwell, be comprehensible to our readers, without this retrospective glance at modern Persian history. In presenting this sketch, we shall draw largely from the excellent digests of these transactions contained in the works of Professor Carl Ritter.

Morier informs us that it was a most singular spectacle to witness the attempt to introduce European customs and discipline into Iran, in opposition to deeply-rooted prejudices and fatalism. Nadir Shah had succeeded in effecting great conquests with undisciplined hordes, but they were swarms of robbers, and their neighbours were equally undisciplined. There was no

obstacle in Persia comparable to the Janissaries of Turkey, but the contempt of the Court, Princes, Grandees, and people, had to be overcome. Abbas Mirza was the soul and centre of the reform movement, which had been promoted by General Gardanne, and the emissaries of Napoleon, and had been supported by French and Russian deserters. He was convinced that it was only by organising an effectual artillery force, that Persia could hope to make an effectual resistance to Russia, her dangerous and disciplined neighbour, all previous attempts against disciplined troops having been unsuccessful. His exertions met with an energetic and useful support, as long as the border province was exposed to danger, and was under his administration; but when, in the course of time, the Persians became disgusted and the Prince tried to soothe them by a premature application of his new system, it fell into a state of impotence.

The death of the Shah, and of the prince, which followed in speedy succession, were heavy blows to the reforms; and the Europeans who introduced them, notwithstanding their valuable support in consolidating the power of the new

Shah, could not reckon on much zeal on his part.

Abbas Mirza, to break the intense hatred of Persians to all coming from the Feringhi, determined to become a recruit, and place himself in the hands of French and Russian drill-masters, to wear a uniform and serve as a model to his people. He began the drill with twenty or thirty men, in a private court of his palace, that he might not excite ridicule. After he had put himself at their head, and risen to the command of his squad, he issued orders to the nobles to carry the musket, as he had done. As there was a want of native officers, he gave, at first, the command of large detachments to the French officers who had accompanied General Gardanne, and hoped, by this plan, to make rapid advances.

The policy of England speedily detected the plan of the French, and the influence of Sir Hartford Jones and General Malcolm soon succeeded in expelling their rivals from the Persian council; but they continued the discipline, only placing British officers in the place of the French. Abbas Mirza forced his countrymen to follow in his track, by his youthful

enthusiasm, and because he was the first and bravest in all exertions and battles. When the French had been entirely expelled by British influence, Abbas devoted his attention, with the aid of the British Mission, to the formation of an efficient artillery, under the care of Lieutenant Lindsay, of the Madras Presidency, whilst Major Christie received the command of the infantry, or *Serbaz*, whose pith consisted, at first, of Russian deserters. The Prince was exposed to the charge of undermining Islam with his Nizam (by cutting off the beards, &c.), and to the wrath of his own brother, Ali Mirza, as well as to the suspicions of other Persians ; but the Iliyat, taken from the wandering tribes of Aserbeidschan became gradually well disciplined and organized. These men were very docile, and capital raw material for soldiers, but the Persian officers made great impediments. Nor could anything have overcome all these obstacles, but the youth, winning character, noble bearing, and personal bravery of Abbas Mirza, coupled with the dangerous attitude of Russia. The Prince was a man full of *naïveté* and humour, extremely anxious for information, nor without perseverance, studious, master of the English

and French tongues, encompassed by a library and a collection of maps, drawn up by his staff, under the supervision of Colonel Monteith—in short, endowed with so many rare qualities, he was one of the most remarkable appearances in the history of Tabris.

Joubert informs us that, although he was far from invariably successful in the defence of his frontier, on the side of Georgia, yet he soon showed the Russians that he was no contemptible or barbarian enemy; he had always opposed his antagonists with determined spirit, but he invariably displayed magnanimity to his prisoners. Feth Ali, the Shah of Persia, had been proud of the talents, but mistrustful of the undertakings of his successor. But, when he witnessed the first review of the well-disciplined troops, he was delighted at the orderly bearing of his rough nomads, whose wild independence had given him so much trouble, and who now appeared broken into the strictest military discipline; and he fancied himself to be suddenly surrounded by a well-organized army, instead of wild barbarians. This impression was very favourable to the establishment of the new reforms, which, if they had been steadily and

seriously pursued, would have brought in their train industry, commerce, manufactures, education, and the other branches of civilization.

Ker Porter, who had shown much attention to the envoy of Abbas Mirza in England, Abul-Hasan-Khan, had been invited as a guest by the Prince, and had paid him a visit in 1819. It was the opinion of this Englishman, that if Abbas came to the throne, European laws and justice would become rooted in Persia. It has turned out otherwise, nor does the ground appear yet prepared for this; something more was wanted than the young European school at Tabris. The sanguine hopes founded on the youthful Crown Prince were not always realized in his riper years. B. Fraser, for example, who was a shrewd judge, found much to blame in him, in 1822. He thought that his European taste was rather a love of novelty than deep statesmanship. He represents his courage as much over-rated, that he was very open to flattery, full of vanity and caprice, and being surrounded by evil counsellors, his undertakings had failed, nor had he ever really made himself popular.

The arsenal at Tabris was, at that time, admirably managed by Mr. Armstrong, and the foundries yielded fire-arms. A number of Persian physicians and surgeons, who had studied in England, at the expense of the Prince, had received appointments at the Court, and in the army. A printing-office was in the course of being established, but the new paper-manufactories were as yet inefficient. The first mines that were opened in the Koflan-Koh were failures, but other subsequent attempts were more successful, in the west of Ahar. When, however, the management of the arsenal passed into the hands of Persians, everything went back, the old disorder returned, the magazines were not filled, money was misappropriated, the factories gave small returns, and the avarice of the Kadjars kept back every penny. The *employés* and troops scarcely received any pay, and the soldiers ran away home during the Turkish incursions.

Nevertheless, the long duration of peace, under Feth-Ali-Shah, did much to forward the increase of population and of prosperity, as well as the humanizing of the rising generation in Persia. But the want of internal ad-

ministration still continued; the avarice of the Kadjar dynasty, the caprice and internal dissensions of the princes, who received all the appointments as governors of provinces, and the universal corruption of the *employés*, prevented even in Aserbeidschan, that progress which its situation and condition might have secured. At that period, (1819), besides Abbas Mirza in Aserbeidschan, nine[•] of his brothers resided as governors in the principal provinces of the kingdom, and each of them, with his regal display, treasury and troops, were quite sovereigns in their own country. But, besides these viceroys, the Shah had no fewer than thirty-nine sons, and many of the husbands of his one hundred and forty daughters, received or expected appointments. This state of things, of itself, sufficed to prevent any great influence of the Crown Prince beyond his own province; and, moreover, to fleece the whole country, to impoverish the treasury, and bring all the relations of the Shah into disorder. If we add to this the uncertain state of the revenue, which is based on tribute in kind, contributions of raw material, and presents of all kinds, and that the receipts in money must be very trifling, where the greatest

amount of the sum squeezed from the people is retained by these vampires, we shall understand how the luxury and avarice of the authorities must still be great impediments to all reforms.

The relative position of the frontier provinces explained their mutual influence and condition. Thus the political and mercantile relations of Aserbeidschan with Erzeroum and Russia, explains its peculiar features. For, without this connection, its early attempts at Europeanizing would not have taken place. Its locality brought the East into early intercourse with the West at Tabris.

After the war, between the Russians and Persians, had been commanded by Abbas Mirza, the peace on the Araxes was settled by the mediation of Sir Gore Ouseley, at that time British Envoy to Persia. J. Morier's account of that period gives us an insight into the course of these proceedings, in which he shared actively himself. It appears, that the Shah moved with his whole court, from his residence to Aserbeidschan. The country is always obliged to bear the cost of every journey of the Shah, as well as of his princes, troops, couriers, and guests (Mehmans), *i. e.* of his whole suite.

Each of the poorest Turcoman nomads was, and is, expected to fill the magazines with his crops ; and the best produce of the land, including the finest flour, barley, straw, cattle, game, meat, fruit, etc. was always reserved for the Shah.

The Shah met with a solemn reception in the plain of Oujan, on the borders of Aserbeidschan, where Abbas Mirza had done everything in his power to surprise his royal father with the progress made by his Government in Europeanizing. In making the Istakkali, *i. e.* the first salutation, the prince threw himself at the feet of the royal horse, and kissed the earth (like Absalom kneeling to David, 2 Sam. xiv. 33), as sign of subjection and obedience. He then proceeded on foot, with a musket over his shoulder, before the horse of the Shah, and only mounted his own when the sovereign ordered him. The latter was then received with evolutions by the disciplined troops, with Turkish music, &c., in order to revive a warlike spirit in him, in spite of the heavy expenses of the war. A temporary palace had been erected on an artificial Tepé, to command a view of the extensive plain, and contained an audience chamber, reception rooms,

(anderun), a harem, &c., resting on gilded pillars, glittering with mirrors and crystals, decorated with paintings, and provided with an upper story, or bala-khaneh, and constituting the private apartments of the Shah, where he could breathe the fresh air, and overlook the vast extent of the encampment, decorating the landscape to an immense distance with its gay pavillions and banners of all colours. The doors of all the thousands of marquees were turned facing the Shah's palace, to enable their occupants to perform the ceremony of *serferan*, or bowing to the king's seat. The royal princes in their *serperdehs*, the viziers and superior officers in similar tents, were grouped around with their suite, surrounded by equal pomp. The corps of troops of each tribe formed separate divisions, such as those of the Bakh-tiaris, the Afschars, the Irakis, the Shahipesend, &c., and were placed according to lot. "Nevertheless," says Morier, "a delightful Oriental confusion prevailed on all hands, men and cattle, tents and shops, hot baths and provisions, luxuries, and twelve unserviceable cannon, being heaped together in disorder. The Shah was accompanied by his harem, as in the time of

Darius, and every officer of rank had hot baths at hand. The consumption of from eighty thousand to ninety thousand men, of whom half were cavalry, was incalculable, and scarcity soon made itself felt in this crowd, merely gathered together to conclude a peace. After many conferences, and much loss of time, owing to squabbles of etiquette about precedence, it was agreed that, instead of written communications, the treaty should be concluded by oral intercourse between commissioners, and a convent at Gulistan, in Karendag, was appointed as the place of meeting. The agents were to be on the part of Russia, the Governor-general of Georgia, and on that of Persia, Mirza-Abul-Hassan-Khan."

Thus, at length, the treaty of 1813 was concluded, determining the frontiers of Russian Trans-Caucasia and Persia, which have only been slightly modified since. The principal border line is formed, to the northward, by the south bank of the Araxes, from Nackhitschewan, and Erivan to the north-west, whilst, to the west, it is formed by the mountain line running direct south from Ararat, and the water-shed of the tract of country between the Lakes Urmia

and Van, down to the southern Taurus, towards the Turkish Pachaliks of Bajasid, Musch, Van, and Mosul. By this means, the political outline of Aserbeidschan is intercalated as a wedge to the north-west, between Russia and Turkey, and forms the northern point of Persia, where the mighty Ararat stands enthroned, as the land-mark of three rival empires.

The exact details of this demarcation, did not appear in the maps of Monteith and Sutherland, but are thus summed up by Morier. The boundary begins on the Caspian Sea, to the north of Astara, and to the south of the Russian port of Lankaran, in the plain of Adineh bazaar. It runs thence to the Schindan mountains, and thence along the coast ridge, to the northwards (by Oujarud), and direct from Balarud north-west through the Sahara or Desert of Moghan, to the Aras (Araxes), at Yedibaluk, a little above its confluence with the Kur.

From thence it had been determined, that the border line should run along the entire south bank of the Araxes, to the

north-west, as far as its confluence with the Kapanek-tschai, behind Mount Megri. From the right bank of the latter river, the frontier of Karabag and Nackhitschewan was carried to the north of the Araxes, over the summit of the Pembek and Aligez, thence to the angle of the frontier of Shuragil, passing over the snowy mountains through Akad, and subsequently along the border of Shuragil, and between the village of Misteri, to the Arpatschai, the left tributary of the Araxes. But the latter demarcation has been subsequently modified, by the second Russian war (1826), and the western portion of this territory, at that time (1813) belonging to Persia, has been incorporated in the Russian province of Erivan, so that the frontier now runs along the south bank of the Araxes, as far as the meridian of Erivan, and then climbs along Ararat in a south-west direction.

By means of this district being handed over to Russia, she has obtained the command of all the passes into Aserbeidschan, on the northern border of Persia, to the west of the Caspian Sea, so that it remains at her option

to settle all disputes arising at Teheran, on every new accession to the throne. It was unavoidable that Russian influence at the Court of Persia should increase, after this change, especially after the Governor-general of Georgia had succeeded in establishing a friendly intercourse with the Turcoman tribes, to the east of the Caspian, whose territory commands both Bucharias. By this means, both shores of the Caspian, with their ports, were thrown open to Russian trade and navigation; and Astrahcan, the mouths of the Kur and the port of Lankaran, were likely to grow in importance, by becoming the emporia of a direct trade to Persia, India and China. Not only Russia, but Persia also profited largely by this increase in trade, resulting from the change in the frontier. Trade has been greatly on the increase ever since, and has led to the necessity of a Russian Resident at Teheran. In 1819, Persia forwarded her silks, cottons, &c., to Tiflis and Astrachan, and thence into the heart of Muscovy, whilst Russia made a return of cloth, leather, glass and paper.

In 1834, Fraser remarked, that owing to

this trade, Tabris was almost the only flourishing town in the empire. Whilst the others were depopulated and ruinous, that city was in a most thriving state. He did not attribute this to an improvement in the administration ; for whatever Abbas Mirza may have done in the way of reform, neither he nor any other Persian ruler have thought much of the condition of the people. There may have been less oppression, because he himself shared more than was customary, in the administration, but every village was taxed to the utmost, and when he left his government to help in conquering Khorasan, Aserbeidschan fell back sadly, under the tyranny of his brother.

Nor were the relations with Turkey, calculated to promote its interests. When J. B. Fraser was in Tabris in 1822, Abbas Mirza had a feud with his Turkish neighbour to the west, and the Scotch traveller gives us a good insight into the petty Persian politics of the day, only concerned with more local considerations. A relation of the Pacha of Bagdad, persecuted by his government, had fled twice to Tabris and Persia for refuge. The first time he had been escorted back with a letter

from the Shah, and had received the Sultan's pardon. But the second time, he was followed by the Turks, and kidnapped over the border, together with some officers of Abbas Mirza. He was dragged off to Tokat, and beheaded; nor was this all, for some Persian pilgrims to Mecca (Shiites), were reported to have been insulted by Turks, on the road to Damascus, and even some women of the Shah and nobles had been ill-used; not even the sanctity of the tent having been respected. Abbas Mirza was roused by this, and also by jealousy of his brother Mohammed Ali Mirza, Governor of Kermanschah, who had increased his power by a quarrel with the Osmanlis of Bagdad. Prompted by these motives, without any notice, he crossed the frontier of Turkey (1821), and attacked Bajasid. One of his generals even laid waste the country about Diarbekir. I admit, that he was recalled and treacherously murdered, but the Porte was not deceived, and seized on all Persian property and merchants in Turkey, by way of reprisals. Abbas Mirza then advanced over the frontier with 40,000 men, but he wanted money, and the support of the Shah.



The Turkish army attacked Topra-Kaleh, by Lake Van, then in the hands of the Persians. Abbas Mirza concentrated his power about Choi, and marched against the enemy. A battle ensued, and the Turks were defeated. The Prince pursued them to the Pass of Deear, three days' march from Topra-Kaleh. At that place, the cholera broke out in the army, one-tenth of its members fell victims, Abbas retired, and the campaign was over. The whole force suddenly dissolved. The expedition was fruitless, but it brought back the cholera, which visited Tabris, and in July, swept off fifteen to twenty persons daily. The plague has often been as great a scourge in Persia, as its Governors.

The treaty of peace, soon after concluded between the two weakened empires, brought little advantage to Abbas. The borders of the countries remained the same as before, the Koordish interlopers were to be mutually handed over, and the Pachas of Erzeroum were not to be so frequently changed, which had previously led to misunderstandings.

So long as Abbas Mirza remained at Tabris,

his presence was advantageous to the prosperity of that city; but his influence was less beneficial in his latter years, when his attention was directed to the conquest of Khorasan. Since the death of Nadir Shah, down to the Kadjar dynasty, all Persian monarchs had resigned their claims to that country, because it was ruled by a small independent Afghan dynasty, of the family of Nadir Shah. When these grand-children of Nadir had been driven out of Kabulistan, by the Afghan king, Ahmed Shah, they obtained an asylum in Herat and Mesched. It is true, that the Persian Shah, to restore his authority there, appointed one of his sons, Hassan-Ali-Mirza, governor of Khorasan; but his influence remained nugatory till the victories of the heir apparent, Abbas Mirza, over the Koordish chiefs of that province (1831—32). It was only after that date, that the Persian government entertained the serious thought of recovering Khorasan, the eastern provinces of the empire, and especially Herat, the centre of trade with India and Bokhara. Hassan Ali, Governor of Khorasan, married a princess of Kamran, Prince of Herat, hoping by violence or stratagem, to obtain easy posses-

sion of that place; but Feth-Ali-Shah did not favour these projects of his son. When Alexander Burnes passed through Mesched, 1832, he met there young Khosru Mirza, son of Abbas Mirza, and Governor of the town, surrounded by British officers, who were organizing his army. Feth-Ali-Shah also refused to support Abbas Mirza in his attempt against Herat. He knew the danger of extending the limits of his empire to those hostile clans and sects, and preferred to remain in alliance with Herat, and to leave it as an independent vanguard of his East provinces, towards the turbulent Afghan tribes, and the Indian States.

But the influence of Abbas Mirza prevailed over that of his father, and in 1833, he sent his eldest son, Mohammed Mirza, afterwards Shah, with an army to the conquest of Herat. The campaign was a failure. Abbas died during the seige; the army was obliged to retire; Mohammed Mirza returned in June, 1834, to the court of his sick grandfather, but hastened thence, to occupy the government of his father in Aserbeidschan, whither he was accompanied by the English Mission, and all its influence. Feth-Ali-Shah died the following

autumn, at Ispahan, during an expedition that he had undertaken against his rebellious son, the Governor of Ispahan and Shiraz. The Shah had reigned forty years, and died in the eightieth lunar year of his life, October 23rd, 1834.

The great confusion invariably resulting from a change of ruler in Persia, was repeated on the present occasion ; and the accession of the legitimate successor, without bloodshed, was due exclusively to the influence of the better organized government and troops of Aserbeidschan, as well as to the united interference of the Russian and British Missions. Tabris exerted, at that period, this beneficial influence on the destiny of Persia, when the young Shah, Mohammed, after lingering in that city till he secured the co-operation of the British officers commanding the army, and provided for the payment of his troops with British subsidies, ultimately left the seat of his former government, and marched victoriously with his troops to Teheran, which he entered, January 2nd, 1835, and where he was soon after crowned.

We have thought it expedient to dwell on this portion of modern Persian history, from

its intimate connection with the state of cultivation introduced at Tabris and in Aserbeidschan. But we shall, henceforth, confine our attention chiefly to the statements of the most competent authorities, relating to Tabris and its government; and we possess an amount of valuable matter on this topic, from the most various and satisfactory sources, exceeding, perhaps, any mass of information imparted of late years with reference to the East.

The series of remarkable men to whom we are indebted for this information, begins with the celebrated African traveller, Browne, who appears to have been murdered probably at the instigation of the Shah, who was very suspicious of British interference, or even inquiries. Hence, it required all the well-known energy of J. B. Frazer, to enable him to travel through Khorasan. The first successor of Browne, was a Christian missionary, Martyns, who exerted considerable influence among the Persians, but died prematurely, in 1822. Nor has he met with imitators as fortunate. His successful conflicts with Persian bigotry and scepticism resulted from his deep conviction of the solemnity of his Apostolic office, from his perfect knowledge

of the Persian, in which he made an admirable translation of the New Testament ; and from his really exemplary life, which could not be denied by the Persians themselves, who used to call him by the beautiful name of Merdi Khodai, *i. e.*, ‘ the man of God.’ He was met at Tabris, in 1811, by the British Mission, consisting of Sir Gore Ouseley, his brother the Orientalist, William Ouseley, and his secretary of embassy, J. Morier, who has added so much to our knowledge of Persia. The missionary died at Tokat, on a journey to the Armenian patriarch, at Etchmiazin. He left behind him, at Tabris, his written controversies with the Mollahs, and challenged them to reply. But this was not done, because they were not capable of doing so. Even the most learned Mollahs of Kerbelah could do nothing, though supported by Mirza Buzurg, Prime Minister of Abbas Mirza. It was at this period, that Captain Monteith, of the Madras Engineers, and Snodgrass, of the Bombay army, began their astronomical observations, subsequently completing a survey of the whole country, under the sanction of the Government of British India.

The military department at Tabris was under the direction of Major D'Arcy Todd, to whom we are indebted for a survey of roads and distances in Aserbeidschan. The British Majors, Stone, Christie, Lindsay, G. Willock, and the Surgeon Campbell, some of whom showed themselves, afterwards, to be very active men, had appointments there at the time of Ouseley's attempts at pacific mediation, besides the Russian commissaries, Colonel Papœuf, and the Imperial Councillor Von Freygang.

On Ker Porter's journey back through Tabris, (summer of 1819) he found a considerable gathering of European talent, combining in the work of reform, and he anticipated great things from this, and from the amiable, graceful character of the heir apparent. In opposition to the policy of France (once powerful in Persia) which consisted in preparing a high road to India, that of England was directed to keeping Persia in *statu quo*, to strengthen and manage it, so as to make it a vanguard, and an insurmountable bulwark to her Indian possessions. To this end, England, at that time, not only forwarded the organization of the infantry and artillery, but contributed large subsidies, sent

with General J. Malcolm, on three successive occasions, within fifteen years, three separate missions, and a large body of British officers from India, who travelled through, and reconnoitred the whole country, and the result of whose labours are contained in the elaborate publications of the General, on Persia. Many officers and volunteers of the Anglo-British army were sent to Persia, to instruct the troops in the exercise and tactics, and many hundreds of artizans and tradesmen of all kinds were sent there to advance the equipment of the army, artillery and fortresses in the European fashion.

Tabris remained the focus of all this activity, especially as the aged Feth-Ali-Shah, in the latter part of his reign, handed over the Foreign Department exclusively to his Heir Apparent, at Tabris. This reform had been a great undertaking, the labour had been great, and the result was comparatively successful, for the bravest Persian troops, who fought previously like wild animals, without any regularity, and though men of remarkable gallantry, had often turned the back to an inferior disciplined enemy, were now a serviceable corps. But the greatest difficulties

had to be encountered in the feudal system, the nomadic life and family organization of the clans under their own chieftains, with different uniforms, and without commissariat, or regular pay.

The population of Persia was estimated at twelve million souls, and its income at three and a half million tomans, *i. e.*, two million pounds sterling, and the armament of men capable of bearing arms, was reckoned at two hundred and fifty thousand, chiefly cavalry, divided into districts, according to tribes, which being distributed among native chiefs, could never act in unison.

Of these troops, on the old footing, besides two thousand cavalry, consisting of the sons of nobles, in immediate attendance on the Shah, and ten thousand cavalry, there were twelve thousand infantry, called the Djan Baze, forming a regular standing army. The latter force, since the time of Abbas, has received some organization by Europeans, and might be compared to the Janissaries, under Selim; they wore a uniform, and were useful in quelling insurrections.

But instead of this uncertain power, the

Kadjars after 1819, laid the basis of a more reliable support for the throne. Under the care of Colonel D'Arcy, of the Royal Artillery, and of Major Lindsay, of the Madras establishment, six troops of artillery were organized, each with six cannon and howitzers. The cavalry, which were trained as lancers, by Colonel Drouville and Lieutenant Willock, did not succeed so well. By these means, a body of eleven to twelve thousand men, far from contemptible for the East, had been already formed, and might have been increased to fifty thousand, to the great advantage of Persia. But the energies began gradually to exhaust themselves, and all the British officers left, without our knowing the cause, save Commander Hart, who remained with the infantry.

This Captain Hart, was then Commander of the Life Guards of the Crown Prince (1824), whilst Dr. McNeill, and, afterwards, Dr. Cormick were his physicians. Major Bacon, Captains Rich and Wilbraham were at Tauris, on a journey, at that time, besides the Russian *chargé-d'affaires*, Colonel Mazerowitch, so that at a dinner party at Tabris, given about that period, was congregated the strangest

medley of nationalities, amounting to twenty. Subsequent to this time, the German Professor Schulz, staid at Tabris eight months, in 1829 ; the German missionary, Hörnle, was there in 1831, carrying on researches among the Koords, and since 1830, a Protestant Mission has been founded among the Nestorians, by Eli Smith and Dwight, and removed to Urmia (1831) under Mr. Perkins and Dr. Grant.

Colonel J. Macdonald Kinneir, since 1826 Political Resident at the Court of the Shah, and the mediator of the peace with Russia in 1826, died at Tabris in 1831. He was succeeded by the brothers Willock, and Sir H. Willock, as Residents. E. Smith's very candid verdict on the character of Abbas, and the state of Tabris, was made during this later and weaker phase in the life of the Prince. Even this rigid course was attracted by the dazzling qualities of the Prince ; but his fame, and the hopes of the regeneration of Persia, that had been founded on him, were exaggerated. He was still, indeed, the patron of Europeans, and the pillar of reform ; he was tolerant to all religions ; but his effeminate mode of life, like that of all Persian nobles, had greatly debilitated and stained his

character ; he had become a hard drinker, a miser, and was prone to duplicity, he grasped greedily at everything, and ruled by caprice, like his predecessors. Nevertheless, he respected the property of strangers more than the former Governors had done ; he kept under the Koords, but justice was purchasable, most public appointments were given to the highest bidders, and the good or bad turn that things took, was principally dependant on the caprice of his Kaimak (Grand Vizier) who had unlimited power.

Tabris has become the most flourishing city in the Persian Empire, not through the exertions of the governor, but through the increase of trade, founded on the greater degree of political security. Manufactures were not greatly improved ; looms, in most households of the town, provided the clothing of the common people ; the few silk weavers who prepared the raw material from Mazanderan, did not yield much ; and the shops of the town only offered the coarsest articles. Everything else, in demand by a luxurious community, had to be imported. The shops of Tabris became filled with the goods of Europe

and of India; the transit trade from Constantinople by the Euxine, and from Russia by the Caspian, was greatly on the increase. The value of goods annually imported from Russia, by Astrachan, was estimated at 600,000 tomans (£300,000 sterling.) The manufactured goods of Cashmere were forwarded to Tabris by the Indian merchants themselves, and exchanged for the bazaar of Constantinople against European merchandize. The goods were brought from British India by Abuschir, and the Arabian goods were introduced by the same route, or by Bagdad. Hitherto, all the trade had remained in the hands of natives; not a European or foreign house was established at Tabris. No commercial treaty had been concluded with Persia by any of the brilliant embassies sent there from England. The nearest English Consul at Trebizond, had the liberty of trading with Tabris, by his agents; Erzeroum became a branch establishment, in order to forward British goods by a cheaper way than before, through Abuschir, which led to a journey of one thousand two hundred miles, and a cost of ten to fourteen tomans for the carriage, whilst the distance and cost by

Trebizond were diminished by one half. Notwithstanding this step in advance, no great amount of trade was as yet attracted to Tabris from Europe, especially as the prejudice still prevailed among the Persian buyers, that the market on the Bosphorus was superior to all others.

These accounts tally exactly with those of B. Fraser, who was at Tabris in 1833, where he refreshed himself, after extensive peregrinations in Persia, and where he saw Mohammed Mirza, just before the death of Feth-Ali-Shah.

Ker Porter had already proclaimed the great change introduced in the education of the royal princes, who had been before chiefly shut up in the harem, under a Mollah. Abbas Mirza had provided for the instruction of his sons, causing them to learn astronomy, mathematics, &c., and to be made familiar with transactions in and out of the palace. Yet his efforts seem to have been misdirected, for no improvement took place.

Prince Mohammed, the young Shah, was only twenty-eight years old, and very corpulent; he developed very little energy in his critical situation, nor any foresight, and he resigned

his fate entirely into the hands of his kaimak, and of foreigners.

The troops of Tabris were in the field against the Koords, and under British officers, when Mohammed first came there. During his father's absence, the province had been fleeced by his brothers, and *employés* whom he had left in charge. The court had become poor in Khorasan; in Aserbeidschan, the treasury was empty; his two brothers, (Jehanger and Khosru Mirza,) required punishment at his hands for their misdemeanour. They were imprisoned at Ardabir. All power was at first committed to the kaimak, Mirza Abul Cassim, who is described as a man of great talent and experience in affairs, but a cunning intriguant, a liar and a hypocrite, full of coarseness and avarice, and so hateful, even to the princes, that he was strangled soon after the accession of Mohammed. Nevertheless, Fraser makes the repeated assertion that Tabris (1834) was the most flourishing place in the empire, because it was independant of the government, had been raised to prosperity by the great activity of its merchants, and had become a grand emporium, and intersecting line of the

Turkish and Russian caravans. The route to Herat brought goods thither from India, Turkey, and Bokhara. Russian produce for South and West Persia, came from Tiflis, Turkish wares came from Erzeroum, English from Tokat. Frazer estimates the value of the European trade at one million sterling, and the home trade at the same amount, a large sum for a poor empire like Persia, and enough to explain the steady prosperity of Tabris. In eighty hours from Tabris you reach Tiflis, with its active European life, thus passing from the east to the west. The transition is almost as speedy to Erzeroum and Trebizond, bringing you in contact with the West at the Bosphorus. No other Persian capital has such a peculiar position in relation to Europe; hence Tabris will always be called to an increasing importance in its influence in civilizing Persia.

Thus far we have followed Ritter in his admirable account of the reign of Feth-Ali-Shah, and the interesting episode of the reform of Abbas. The progressive movement was even diffused to the Affghans, and to Bokhara, where attempts were made to organize and discipline the troops, a system that has se-

cured the superiority of Europe over the East.

The hopes of sanguine politicians relating to the sudden improvement of Asiatic countries, have been commonly doomed to disappointment. The progress of nations is a gradual affair, nor can it be effected by sudden jumps or revolutions. Hence, Asia cannot be rapidly rescued from the decay into which centuries of misgovernment and misfortunes have plunged it. Persia is also too remote to feel much influence from our culture. Even Asiatic Turkey is almost as deteriorated as Persia, and the reforms have not yet effected half so much there as in European Turkey. If the pliant, industrious Persians, with their excellent natural gifts, and malleable character, had occupied the place of the indolent and immoveable Turks, who do nothing great save in military matters, if they had inhabited the shores of the Euxine, European culture would have effected much more in the East. The inquisitive Persian would have acquired European arts, and civilization would have passed into Asia. The Turk, notwithstanding his many honourable qualities, will remain a barbarian in the European frock-coat, he will

appropriate our vices sooner than our virtues, and lose the fine old Turkish characteristics—fidelity, honesty and loyalty. Distance was the great obstacle to culture in Persia, which, if she had been a neighbour, must have rapidly adopted many of our advantages, even under the worst of rulers. A reformer, having the energy, and enlarged views of Peter, could, even now, effect wonders among the docile, lively and impressionable Persians. He might found a great civilized empire in the heart of Asia, between Russia and British India. This would be impossible in Turkey, owing to the degeneracy of the race, to their indolence,⁴ and to the disproportion of the Osmanli population to the Rajahs.

The reader will have seen from the previous sketch, that, notwithstanding the sanguine hopes of his friends, Abbas Mirza was not the man to rescue an empire so deeply degraded. He became an early victim to his indulgences; and his son, Mohammed Shah, only inherited his sensual propensities and weaknesses, without his lofty aims, chivalrous character, and enthusiasm in favour of European improvements. He encountered little opposition on his accession

to the throne ; for the fleeced and exhausted provinces and cities cannot even afford material for insurrection, notwithstanding the ambitious views of many of the provincial satraps. In the latter years of his reign, when his constitution of body and mind had long been completely prostrate, Feth-Ali-Shah had given up the whole provincial administration to his sons. He fostered a hydra of parties and pretenders. When death, at length, overtook him (1834), all his sons aimed at the throne. But the material means were wanting to them, and the small force of the son of Abbas Mirza, backed by British gold and officers, sufficed to secure the throne for him. Zile Sultan, who had usurped the authority at Teheran, was hurled from the throne ; and the rebellious uncles in Fars were subdued. The Kadjar dynasty retained the sceptre. The empire itself was too decayed, and the neighbouring states too exhausted to oppose a rival to Mahommed Shah. Even the Affchar race was now too degenerate to produce another savage hero of the stamp of Nadir Shah. In the remotest provinces, the discipline of the regular troops, established by British officers, triumphed over the old Asiatic disorder and

barbarism. The rebellious uncles could not resist this small force; and the greater part of them were brought as captives to Teheran, where some died, as was reported, of cholera or prison fever, and others were restored to favour.

Some of his father's ambition appeared to inspire the young Shah during the first years of his reign, ere his corpulence and enormous appetite had mastered him, together with the gout, which afterwards embittered his life and throne. He determined to recover Khorasan, and to complete the conquest of Herat. The British mission, thinking it to be the interest of England, and of our Indian empire, to maintain independant dynasties in Affghanistan, and to preserve tranquillity in Central Asia, as a security against Russian aggression, looked on this expedition as a calamity, whilst, on the other hand, it was supported by the Muscovite mission. Good judges, have, however, felt doubtful if these encroachments of Persia, inuring her troops to war, were really advantageous to England and hurtful to Russia. I have met with Englishmen at Tabris and Erzeroum, intimately acquainted with Oriental affairs, and yet, agreeing with Morier that the British Government attaches much too great a

value to the political importance of Persia, and makes much greater sacrifices to the influence of the Court of Teheran than that enervated and degenerate country deserves, especially as it is so remote from India.

But Russia, as the nearest neighbour, has a closer interest; and when the Russian envoy at that time, Count Simonitsch, secretly favoured the plans of conquest entertained by the young Shah, it was only to diminish British influence in Persia, and to oppose the diplomatic and military agents of England. If Sir Henry Ellis had, at that time, advocated the campaign against Herat, Count Simonitsch would have probably opposed it. English and Russian influence are in perpetual conflict at the Court of Teheran; and sometimes the activity and controversies of the agents of these two great powers go beyond the intentions of their respective governments. Though Sir Henry Ellis declared that *England would conceive herself aggrieved by the conquest of any part of Affghanistan*, the preparations for the expedition continued.

For this reason, all the British officers quitted the Persian army, in 1837. But the Russian mission supported the undertaking with its

advice, and accompanied the Shah to the walls of Herat, where the weak-minded Kamran Shah, his sagacious Vizier Yar Mohammed, both favourable to European tactics, prepared a vigorous resistance. On the other hand, Dost Mohammed of Caboul, and Kohundil Khan of Kandahak had approached Persia, and courted the friendship of the young Shah, and of his mighty Russian protector. Threatened by the arms of Runjeet Singh, and of the English, these Affghan Princes thought they must seek for aid from Persia and Russia, although the latter was too remote, and the former too helpless to give them any effectual support. It is well known that the Persian campaign against Herat, and its siege in 1838, were a failure. The Persian expedition, weakened by hardships and disease, fell back ; and since that time, the gouty Shah abstained from all conquests, whilst his ailment and imbecility augmented yearly.

It was at this period, that France tried to recover its influence at the Persian court. Since the mission under Bonaparte, France had given up all diplomatic relations with Central Asia. Not having any commercial transactions with Persia, she has much less immediate

interest in her affairs than Austria. But France has long entertained different sentiments of national dignity and her political influence, to those harboured by the Court of Vienna.

Notwithstanding his indolence and limited capacity, Mohammed Shah, was perfectly aware that he owed his throne to the organization of his army by British officers. He also knew that the maintenance of a regular force was his only security against his uncles and neighbours. As England was sulky, and Russia dangerous, the wiseacres at Court remembered the existence of another Feringhi power. The novel of Haji-Baba still gives the best insight into the contracted spirit of Persian policy. The name of Napoleon had penetrated even into their benighted atmosphere, and the Persian government, in their perplexity, thought of resorting to France for military inspectors.

Hussein Khan, a handsome man of shrewd character, but not of the noblest birth, was intrusted with this mission, which made more sensation at Paris than it deserved. The French who are bad travellers, had formed quite an erroneous notion of Persia, from the very incorrect descriptions of their former travellers,

Tavernier, Chardin, &c., who being generally tradesmen, and dazzled with the splendour of the Court, gave very exaggerated descriptions of it, dwelling almost exclusively on the pomp and wealth of the great. Hence, the French regarded Persia, as a fabulous land, the realization of the Arabian Nights. It is only recent, chiefly British travellers who have shown Persia in a true light, describing its decay and the decrease in its population. The French did not know these works, and their vanity was gratified by the pompous reception of the envoy of a flourishing oriental Empire, at the Tuileries.

Hussein Khan who had received his appointment by accident or caprice, played his part admirably. He soon saw through the French, with whom a great quack generally thrives best, and though his funds were low, he extricated himself from all difficulties. His kalpak and his silk caftan, imposed at the hotel and on shopkeepers. He made purchases nominally for his court, and to show his countrymen the wonders of French art. The object of his mission, he treated as a secondary matter, but he was himself deceived in his attempts to enlist

inspectors. When it was found that Louis Philippe must pay the debts of the envoy, his credit sank sadly, and no one took any farther notice of him. He afterwards visited England, but there he met with a cooler reception, and was judged more accurately.

We are not aware if the Shah subsequently paid his debts, but this we know, that on his return to Teheran, all the luggage of his mules and pack-horses was seized, and most of the pretty things which the Ex-Envoy had brought to adorn his house, were retained by the sovereign.

A dozen French officers had accompanied these Modes of Paris, most of them discharged officers, giving themselves the title of Colonel, and attired in the most fanciful uniforms. Count Damas, an elderly man of the world, succeeded in making the greatest impression at Teheran. This impudent quack, had been a non-commissioned officer under Napoleon, and had brought his wife with three female relations to Persia. His arrogance imposed, and his stories were believed. At his first audience, he seated himself before the Shah, pleading a wound received at Austerlitz. This innovation was outrageous, but did him no injury. His grey

hairs and moustachio, commanding face, and aristocratic bearing, imposed on the Shah and vizier, who thought that so remarkable a man must be able to effect great things.

Count Damas amused the Shah, and increased his appetite, as well as helped his digestion. He also led him to infer that he had deterred Napoleon from marching against Persia. At the end of the first audience, Damas was appointed Persian General, and MM. Delacroix and Pigeon, were appointed as his subordinates. The other Frenchmen received inferior grades. Abbé Vidal had been engaged as teacher of the French language, and was to be the tutor of the Crown prince. The latter was at that time a boy nine years of age, and had lately seen the Emperor Nicholas in Armenia, when the colossal Czar, bored with the etiquette of the interview, had dandled the lad on his knee, and had suffered him to play with his Imperial mustachio. The familiarity, personal appearance, and pompous entourage of the great Czar, are said to have made a great and lasting impression on the prince, and his suite. Accordingly, the Court of Teheran thought it expedient that the heir apparent should acquire the

universal polite language of Europe, that he might utter some appropriate sentences, if the Russian ruler should ever think fit to nurse him on his knee again.

I have stated elsewhere, that I met MM. Delacroix, Pigeon and Vidal, in Georgia. They were amiable Frenchmen, of sociable manners, and their conversation was very entertaining, as they had resided four years in Persia. These gentlemen had experienced the same fate as most military men and engineers, who have offered their services to the Porte. The authorities in both cases had received them well, approved their reforms, and promised great things. They had been most profuse in expressions of gratitude, when they saw their awkward squad disciplined, and their batteries organized. But their zeal cooled, so soon as they discovered that money was wanted, for Persians are especially much meaner than Turks in expenditure, the latter being not unfrequently governed by generous impulses. There are Turkish grandes, who prefer spending to receiving, and who not only love splendour, but are animated with a liberal spirit, which is hardly known by name in Persia. Owing to

the disordered finances, and poverty of the country, the pay of the troops is much more uncertain in Persia than in Turkey, where, since the reforms, more regularity has taken place in political economy, and the Europeans serving the Porte are now paid with tolerable regularity.

The indolence and indifference of Orientals, usually soon infect Europeans, who have received appointments in the East, and their zeal for reform speedily evaporates. Suspicion and an almost ineradicable antipathy of Europeans, is an additional impediment to the success of well-intentioned Franks, of whom the number is limited. A real improvement of the Oriental character, especially among the great, is probably impossible, without a great revolution.

Mohammed Shah was prevented, by his gout and corpulence, from attending frequently the military exercises. He aged rapidly, and preferred to recline on the cushions of the divan, only getting himself lifted into the saddle on extraordinary occasions. He had strangled his old Kaimakan, Mirza Abul Kassim, in a fit of wrath. Since then, the old teacher of the Shah, Hadschi-Mirza-Agassi, acted as vizier.

This old Mollah was a strange fellow, was reckoned learned and wise, devout, and even holy, though to the Europeans, he appeared a mixture of a cunning fox and a madcap. He was not equal to his post. He was deficient alike in knowledge of the country and penetration, and in honesty and fidelity. But such qualities are not in request in Persia. The confidence and the favour of the Shah are everything. The old Hadschi committed the strangest vagaries; he squandered the public revenue in the wildest projects, gave away the provinces and towns to the greatest scoundrels, and extorted vast sums from them for his own privy purse.

The Minister exercised a wonderful influence over the decrepid Shah, who let him manage everything, with the remark, that the Hadschi was as wise as he was holy, and if all did not receive justice at his hands, it was owing to the imperfection of human nature. The unhappy monarch, who was exposed to attacks of spleen, during which he emptied the vials of his wrath on his subjects, enjoying and assisting at cruel executions; always showed an invariable indulgence to his Minister. His weak mind was

possessed with the fixed idea that Persia did not produce a wiser or holier man than the Hadschi: Abul Kassim had fallen a victim to his first attack of bile, but Mirza Agassi passed successfully through the ordeal of all his crises. I admit that his favour was openly attributed, in Persia, to foreign influence. The Mollah, who was often stubborn, and obstinately opposed the best suggestions, became docile and manageable, at the least hint of Count Medem in the name of Russia. But what could Russia care about the misfortunes of that state? What object could she have in opposing the desolation of the country, and its depopulation, by the oppression of a grasping sycophant and madcap? It is evident that the increasing misery of the people, and decay of the empire, could only be favourable to the plans of Russian aggression, and reconcile the population to a system which, though despotic, presented the advantages of order and security, in bright contrast with the caprices and whims of their own selfish rulers.

The ruling passion of Hadschi-Mirza-Agassi, after his well-filled coffers, was the cannon foundry of the English. The workshops of Teheran were perpetually engaged in casting

cannon of all calibres. The provinces could not supply metal fast enough to satisfy this peculiar fancy of the Hadschi. A large part, not only of the Saa durant (irregular contributions), but even of the Maleyat, (or regular taxes), were appropriated to this purpose. Unless one gun, at least, was cast per week, the Minister had blue-devils, and some grandee or *employé* fell a victim to him. The Vizier succeeded even in infecting the Shah with part of his rage for casting guns. He did not take much interest in the mounting and equipment of the guns, and the plans of M. Delacroix, on this score, met with a cool reception. The cost of the harness appeared to him excessive; he preferred his guns without carriages or horses, and Delacroix only managed to mount two weak batteries. The Vizier was, moreover, fond of military parades, without understanding anything about them. In fact, the wilder the chaos and confusion, the greater was his delight, and if the review presented a glorious cloud of gunpowder, and canopy of dust, he returned in a charming mood to the Shah, whom he regaled with a gorgeous description of the spectacle.

The French officers, at length, disgusted with impediments and intrigues, let the Vizier have it all his own way. Count Damas did not long enjoy his title of General, he died soon after of fever, and his wife and niece did not long survive him. He had many bitter hours before his death, owing to the Persian authorities refusing to pay him and his greedy dragomans and servants. The other French officers could find no redress, and were forced to appeal to the Russian embassy. Count Medem, a man of honourable character and engaging manners, interceded with the Vizier, who acceded instantly to his request, paid the Frenchmen, and decorated them, moreover, with the Order of the Sun and Lion, set with mock diamonds. Soothed, satisfied, and decorated, though disappointed in their fondest dreams, these French adventurers, now dubbed Persian Colonels, started on their journey home, with two ladies, greyhounds, poodles, and parrots, leaving only one of their number behind.

Abbé Vidal also resigned his office, and obtained his salary, through the medium of Count Medem. We have seen the jovial priest in Georgia, where his attire and manner were

anything but clerical. In the course of subsequent conversation, he imparted much interesting information about Persia. Like almost all Europeans, he had the lowest opinion of the Persians, describing them as lying, hypocritical, and rascally. Yet he thought the common people not half so corrupt as the great. The Governor of Urmia had once replied to a sermon of the missionary Horul, with the remark, that a Persian lies as long as his tongue moves. This was confirmed by many narratives of Abbé Vidal, showing how deeply this vice is rooted in the Persian Court. For even the Shah, on his silken divan, seldom opened his mouth without uttering a few untruths, though, as absolute despot, he need not have had recourse to this expedient. Lying is the habit of life in Persia, and is sucked in by babes, with their mother's milk.

Abbé Vidal had enjoyed numerous opportunities of looking behind the scenes at the Court, and in the domestic circles of Teheran. He had not succeeded in teaching the young Crown-Prince French, owing to the opposition and intrigues of the Mollahs and the old Had-schi. But he had instructed some of the pages,

and the sons of noblemen, and he spoke highly of the quickness and docility of the Persian children. When he left Teheran, there was a considerable number of black-eyed Persian lads, with lambs'-wool caps and hanging sleeves, who spoke French almost like Parisians. But cunning and duplicity is inherent in them from the tenderest age. Abbé Vidal could have taught them all the science of Europe much sooner than have brought them to practise Christian morality. He added, that it was a hopeless undertaking to attempt to awaken or improve their moral sense, to work on their mind and heart, and to bring them to practise the virtues of neighbourly love, forbearance, disinterestedness, and magnanimity, which, I admit, are rarely developed, even in us.

Nor did Abbé Vidal give a favourable picture of domestic life in Persia. On all hands he detected the germs of brotherly hatred, and envy. The children at an early age, are taught to direct their attention to the paternal inheritance, and hence every effort is made to secure their father's favour. The children are treated very differently, according to the charms of their mothers. The child of a favourite wife, will be

clothed in satins, and fed on dainties, whilst the infant of a less favoured spouse will be neglected. Hence discord and strife.

One of the French ladies described to us her visits to different harems. She met a German woman, from Georgia, in the harem of a Mollah, who had been stolen by Koords, and had almost forgotten her mother tongue. Several other German women had been swept off from the colonies near Tiflis, and bore their fate with equal resignation. One of the colonists in Georgia, who had thus lost his wife, received suddenly a letter from his better-half, informing him frankly that she had married a Persian priest, and had several children and that she was quite happy, and she concluded by advising her first lord to follow her example.

When the gout of Mohamed Shah continued to increase, notwithstanding the mixtures of Persian doctors, and the amulets and talismans of the Mollahs, he had recourse to the art of Europeans. The consular doctors, including Dr. Cassolani, were called in. But the steady growth of his malady defied all medical skill, and his spleen augmented with his disorder. He was vexed to see thousands of his subjects going

about him in the enjoyment of health, whilst he was a prey to disease, and required help to descend from the divan. During a fit of indigestion, he required the sight of human suffering to give him endurance. It required the amputation of many noses and ears, to brace his weak nerves, and to give him an appetite. He could not satisfy his cruel lusts on the grand scale of Timur or Nadir, for the humane spirit of the age, and the influence of the European power would not tolerate such enormities. But though the gouty Shah had no opportunity of practising the tyranny on such a vast scale as Nadir, he showed a tendency to that eccentric and humorous persecution, more common in the West, in such characters as Ivan the Terrible, Nero, and Louis XI.

Abbé Vidal related that the Shah took an especial pleasure in causing fathers, among his courtiers, to be cudgelled by their sons. He laughed so immoderately at this spectacle, that he was obliged to hold his sides, forgot his pains for a moment and eat his pilaf with improved appetite.

He would have indulged in executions, if he had not been prevented by the Vizier. Mirza Agassi loved guns and tomons, but he did not

like bloodshed and torture. Whenever he heard of capital condemnations, he hurried to the seraglio, reproached the Shah, and made him compute the punishment into a fine, of which the humane Vizier, of course, got the lion's share.

He saved many heads, but he was not so successful with ears and noses, nor could he stop the cudgelling. But there is one means of avoiding punishment still in vogue, as at the time of Hadschi-Baba. The criminal generally negotiates with the executioner, and each time that the latter lifts the lash, or wets his knife, the victim whispers a certain amount of cash in his ears. The higher the sum bid, the gentler is the chastisement, and in some cases, the ear is only ripped to make the blood flow, after which, the kalpak is pulled over the scratch to hide the cheat. Corruption is even more widely spread in Persia, than in Russia and Turkey. Bribery reaches to the throne, and Delacroix told me the following fact, which beats everything in Hadschi-Baba. Mohamed Shah wished one day to assist at a battue, in which the game was driven before him into a convenient position, and shot by him at his leisure. By an oversight of the inspector of the chase, the game

was let loose before the monarch was perched. A portion had the good luck to escape. The Shah, in a rage, condemned the culprit to lose his ears, and the verdict was to be carried out in his presence. But the inspector was a man of substance, and whispered a shower of tomans into the ears of the executioner. The Shah, who had been engaged with another suit, heard a few words of the secret conversation. His wrath was partially cooled, he directed the inspector to double his offer of tomans, which he emptied into his privy purse, but made a present of the punishment to the culprit, who received his ears into the bargain.

The Kadschar dynasty has never provided a ruler to compare in ability, with the Afschar Nadir Shah. Hence, perhaps, their deep hatred of the latter. Mohamed Shah was puerile enough to order the bones of the Great Nadir to ^{be} buried under his door-posts, that he might tread over them so often as he left the palace.

The decay of the dynasty has accompanied that of the country. Neither in Persia nor in Turkey, could the energetic ministers of former days re-enact their parts, even if they had the

inclination to do so. Their subjects would refuse obedience, nor would the English and Russian Embassies tolerate their excesses.

Even the political opponents of Russia, must admit that in her relations with Persia, an impartial judgment would pronounce her proceedings to be moderate, almost magnanimous. When a fanatical mob attacked the Russian Embassy at Teheran, and slew the Envoy, the Czar's Government did not resent the affront as an occasion of war, but only demanded the punishment of the offenders. A large part, even, of the debt contracted in the last war, has been remitted. When Paskiewitsch advanced victorious to Lake Urmia, it was in the power of Russia to recover the fine provinces of Ghilan and Masanderan, on the Caspian Sea, celebrated as a paradise by Firdusi, and once the property of Peter the Great. The possession of these splendid maritime provinces would have been of incalculable value to Russia. The north-east slope of the Abkur chain, towards the Caspian, is rich in minerals, especially coal, and the soil is indescribably fertile. The climate is unhealthy, indeed, especially to northern settlers. But it is well known that Russia does not scruple to

sacrifice human life to state interests. In the genial climate of Masanderan, most of those tropical plants flourish which cannot stand the cold of the valleys of Georgia. The Russian Major Woskobismikoff of the Corps of Mines, discovered excellent veins of coal, silver, lead, and copper, there. The virgin forests afford an almost inexhaustible supply of timber for ship building. Even palm trees flourish in its gentle air, whilst not even the olive can thrive at Derbent, on the Russian shore of the Caspian. It is only by the occupation of these provinces, that the Russian trade on the Caspian could acquire some importance. The ports are also much better on the south coast. Russian agents in the East express pretty candidly their wish that these provinces, now so desolate, might be added to the Russian sceptre. Even at Tabris, the gentlemen of the Muscovite Consulate, speak the same language as those of Tiflis and Erivan, saying: "Ghilan and Masanderan must belong to us, and the Government of St. Petersburg will eventually see the consequences of this occupation to Trans-Caucasia, which would then become a boon, whilst it is now a burthen to Russia."

The same sentiments were probably uttered by the Muscovites who accompanied Paskiewitsch, when he dictated peace to Persia, at Tabris. But the Emperor Nicholas, and Chancellor Nesselrode, adopted the maxim of acting a moderate part in the East, and of only advancing gradually, especially as their glance was also directed Westwards, where an eruption of the revolutionary crater threatened. A clear political brain, once stated in the *Tribune of Deputies* at Paris, that so long as the Polish question was not definitively settled, people at St. Petersburg deliberate before they take any step in the East.

The Emperor Nicholas is by no means tormented with a love of form and thirst of ambition, like his predecessors, Peter I. and Catherine II. He has only done in this respect, what was unavoidable in a state and dynasty destined for conquest. It gives him more pleasure to place his foot on the neck of the European democracy, then to conquer the Celestial Empire, and install a Russian governor-general at Peking, or Canton.* Yet, on the other hand, the policy of the Cabinet of St. Petersburg is far from being so pacific and

* This was written before the embassy of Menschikoff to Turkey in 1853.

disinterested, as it is represented by its admirers. The fortresses of Gumri and Erivan, the wharfs of Nicholaieff, and the fleet of Sevastopol, as well as the military demonstration on the Danube, are in diametrical contradiction to these laudations of political moderation in Russia. The Emperor Nicholas has not the ambition of conquering Persia and Turkey at present, but he is quietly preparing the way for their future occupation by one of his successors. Unless unforeseen accidents should arise, or another storm burst forth in the West, Persia and Asiatic Turkey will eventually fall like over ripe pears, of their own accord, into the lap of Russia, without any efforts on her part.

According to the views of Russian agents, Russia played far too moderate a part at the treaty with Persia. She remained satisfied with the Araxes frontier, with Erivan and Nachitschewan, and a small angle of the holy Mount Ararat, together with the coast of Lenkoran, and the mountains of Talysch. I grant that Etchmiazin, the ancient Armenian patriarchal see, was included in these acquisitions, securing a powerful religious influence to Russia, extending over all the scattered members

of the Armenian family. But those who know the strength of Russia, and the weakness of Persia, must still wonder at the moderation of the former, in not grasping Ghilan and Masenderan from the vanquished and humiliated Shah. A continuation of the war, and a flickering of departed energy, under Feth-Ali-Shah and Abbas Mirza, only served to expose more completely the weak side of the empire. Nothing opposed the advance of a Russian army to Teheran, save the wreck of an army utterly discouraged and disorganized. As Persia was even then in a state of impotence, which has only increased since, all that was required of the Northern giant to seize the four provinces south of the Caspian, was merely to stoop and pick them up. England would scarcely have declared war against Russia, for the sake of some Persian provinces, and the other European powers could not care much for an extension of Russia in this direction. Russian agents in the East still lament the moderation of Muscovy at the last peace, and maintain that the Emperor himself does not appreciate these fine provinces. Nicholas does not, at any time, seem to have thought of a

great Oriental empire under his sceptre ; and, after his visit to Trans-Caucasia, in 1837, his desire for conquest in Western Asia does not seem to have increased. He is said to have expressed to General Rosen his disappointment at the appearance of the Trans-Caucasian provinces, adding, that fifty years would be required to organize them properly in the Russian fashion, *i. e.*, with barrack discipline. When Trans-Caucasia is so far civilized, that its Armenians, Tartars, and Georgians, can be drawn as recruits, and put on the grey-coat, Muscovy will have accomplished her mission, and then, the Double Eagle can take a farther flight over the Araxes, and bring other populations under the sway of the Russian barracks' system.

M. Von Osserow tried to impress me with the moderate tone of the Petersburg Cabinet, in its instructions to the Embassy of Teheran. He stated that, all suggestions from Russia, relating to trade, were couched in the language of supplication, that Russia had never spoken as conqueror there, or reminded Persia of her weakness. The only occasion, when she used a threatening tone, was when Count Medem

claimed the extradition of eight hundred Russian deserters, most of them in the Shah's service, and converts to Islam, which they embraced as a protection. The Shah and Hadschi refused, at first, to accede, but when Count Medem threatened to send to Tiflis for troops, they gave in; the unhappy deserters were marched to Russia, but some hundreds escaped to Turkey, or managed to conceal themselves. Other requests of Russia were only partly acceded to.

English diplomacy did not enjoy nearly so much influence under Mahomed Shah, as under Feth-Ali-Shah and Abbas Mirza. The greater parsimony of the British Government, eschewing subsidies and presents, was not calculated to advance British interests in Persia. Though the members of the British mission were more familiar with the country than the Russians, Colonel Shiel played a very subordinate part to Count Medem, whose refined manners, and amiable character, were well adapted to the polished tastes of the Persians. Since the project of the conquest of Herat had been given up, there was no prominent subject of agitation at the Court. The question about the boundary of Persia and Turkey were dis-

cussed at Erzeroum, under the mediation of Russia and England; it was not likely to lead to a war between the two exhausted Moslem Empires, nor did it excite much interest at Teheran.

At the time of my arrival at Tabris, France had accredited Count Sartiges as its Envoy at the Court of Teheran. Circumstances had induced the French Cabinet to see the propriety of recovering its influence in Persia. The discharged French officers had reported that people in the East had too little respect for *la grande nation*, adding, they had been forced to seek redress through the Russian Embassy. The boundary question was another motive; but the principal incentive, was a piece of violence practised against the French Lazzarists at Urmia. The former Governor of Urmia, an uncle of the Shah, who had a great partiality for the French, presented the Lazzarists and their congregation with a church, which he had unjustly taken from the Nestorians. After his removal, the Nestorians petitioned for the restoration of the church, whose possession was secured to them by the new Bey of Urmia. The Lazzarist Missionaries sided with the Catholics,

whilst the American Missionaries, as Protestants, stood up for the just claims of the Nestorians. The quarrel became embittered at Urmia, where the Catholics only form a small body; and the Lazzarists had a very unpleasant time of it. They were insulted by the Nestorian mob, who threatened to assail their houses. The final decision in this matter was left to the Shah, or rather, to the Vizier. The Bey of Urmia, who had been brought over by the Nestorian clergy, gave a report, very unfavourable to the Catholic Christians, and Mirza Agassi resolved to make short work of it, and turn the Lazzarists out of the country. He found this an easy task, as he was countenanced in it by the Russian and British Missions, who viewed the attempts of France to gain religious and political influence in Persia with an evil eye. The Lazzarists retired to Mossul, save one Missionary, who withdrew to Tabris, and appeared to keep aloof from Persian affairs.

Heavy complaints reached the French Embassy at Constantinople, from the Lazzarists. All the French clergy in the East, supported them with pious zeal, especially the celebrated French author, Eugene Bové, who still resides

at Constantinople, with a salary from the society at Lyons, for the propagation of the Catholic Faith. There were bad complaints of persecution of the Catholics, of affronts to France, and the French Cabinet was openly called upon to interfere in Persia. Count Bourqueney proposed to M. Guizot, to send Count Sartiges, a young attaché, to Teheran, and the French minister assented, as he wished France still to continue the protection of Catholics in the East, and felt the propriety of extending French influence in those parts. M. Goep was sent to Erzeroum, and three months after, Count Sartiges started for Teheran, where he met with a brilliant reception, especially as he brought large presents. We could not discover anything definite, respecting the influence of this diplomatist, in Persia. As a rival of Russian and English interests, he was received coolly by Count Medem and Colonel Shiel. The Lazzarists were allowed to return to Urmia, but the Church remained in the hands of the Nestorians.

CHAPTER VI.

The Saharet Chain of Mountains—Liwan—Maraghia—A Delightful Encampment—The Château of the Sardar of Tabris—Mirza Ali, the cawass—Determination to Explore the Districts South of the Lake Urmia—Scarcity of Information respecting those Regions—Preparations for the Journey—The Village of Sirdari—Mamegan—An Unpleasant Adventure—The Cadi—View from the Summit of Nedili-Dagh—Interesting Geological Phenomena—Binab.

ONE hot July morning, when the thermometer, soon after sunrise, showed 23° Reamur, I rode, accompanied by Dr. Cassolani and a Persian guide, from Tabris, southward towards the Saharet chain of mountains, which rises about 4,000 feet above the level of the Lake Urmia, and 8,400 above the Black Sea, the numerous streams which flow from these mountains, into the plains below, supply the greatest quantity of water to the Lake Urmia. During the latter part of my stay at Tabris, the heat had become unbearable, and the dust

which the diurnal winds blew in clouds through the narrow streets, rendered the atmosphere still more stifling. At this season, every one who can possibly get away from the town, hastens to the cool terraces of Saharet, and frequent during these hot months, the green valleys of this pretty mountain group. The Consuls usually leave Tabris about the middle of July, for these cool heights. Herr Von Ossew, the Russian Consul General, with the attachés of the Consulate, had pitched his tent near the village of Herbi, on the little river Wasmisch-tschai, and intended remaining there until the middle of September. Our agreement was to meet in one of the highest villages of the Saharet, near the hot springs of Liwan; Dr. Cassolani was very anxious to explore those springs, to which, the natives ascribe miraculous virtues.

Liwan is a large village, with a remarkably fruitful entourage, being completely surrounded by gardens, meadows and fields. The corn was cut, but the clover presented a most luxuriant crop. The people of Liwan correspond to the country, and appear quite thriving, compared to most Persian populations.

The men are tall and muscular, with handsome features, and a dark brown complexion. We cannot pause to describe the thermal springs and geological features of this remarkable district, which presents some phenomena of an almost anomalous character.

We passed a day at Liwan. M. Osserow, and the gentlemen of his suite, had arrived before us, with an escort of Cossacks, and had pitched their tents in a small mountain meadow, situated in a narrow limestone defile. The party had brought their Nestorian women with them, these ladies occupying each a small tent beside that of their lords. Nor did the fair inmates venture to unveil the charms of their countenances, notwithstanding the solitude of the place.

At the distance of a few hours from our bivouac on the Wasmisch-tschai, lay the little town of Maragha, on a river of the same name—a place celebrated in the middle ages, for the observatory of the great Persian astronomer, Nassyr-Eddyn, who drew a favourable horoscope for the rising fortunes of the great Mogul ruler, Hulaku-Khan. The Observatory secured the prosperity of the city, which possessed an

academy, and attained great celebrity in the thirteenth century. But Hulaku did not long enjoy his successes ; he died in 1264, at Maragha, and was soon followed to the grave by his wife, Daghus Khatun, who was a Christian. Both their tombs are said still to exist ; and Morier, as well as Kinnier, who visited Maragha, found some interesting antiquities there.

I was obliged to give up my design to visit Maragha, as I had left my interpreter and pack-horse at Tabris. I, therefore, resolved to accompany M. Ossew and the Russian embassy to Herbi, and rode down the course of the Wasmisch-tschai, through a narrow valley, which presented an exuberant growth of vegetation and verdure ; whilst the slopes, on both sides, being deficient in all humidity, stood out grim and bare above the grassy glen. We arrived, at first, at the large village of Bineh, surrounded by enchanting gardens. The valley widens near Herbi. We caught sight of the Russian tents, pitched in a beautiful meadow watered by sparkling streams, and under the shade of colossal willows and poplars. A dozen Cossacks kept watch in the neighbour-

hood. M. Osserow received me with his usual hospitality; we enjoyed an abundant repast, and stretched on the sward, we inhaled with delight the cool evening mountain air. Seldom are the eyes of the Russian traveller greeted and soothed with such a verdant scene, in the height of summer, and amidst the arid hills and barren plains that cover so large a part of the country. We sat there almost till midnight, listening with interest to M. Osserow's account of the politics of Persia.

The following day, I returned with Doctor Cassolani to Tabris, passing through Halat-Haschan, where you see a pavilion or chateau of the Sardar of Tabris, situated on an island in an artificial lake. It is an ancient and annual custom, for the Sardar to come to this pavilion, and receive the investiture of his mantle of honour. The little chateau is built of bricks, and its interior is arranged entirely according to Persian taste. The arched ceiling of the lower saloon is adorned with variegated frescoes, representing landscapes, trees, flowers, and birds, but not giving a very high idea of Persian art. The sun penetrates into the building through windows of coloured glass; for the Persians

are partial to this sort of subdued light ; and the female apartments of Persian grandees have these painted windows. Halat-Buschan, with its numerous poplars and willows, and tolerably abundant under-growth, presents, like the vale of Herbi, a charming oasis amidst the arid, bare, and sun-burnt landscape of Tabris. And this oasis must formerly have been still more enchanting, when its verdure and shady foliage were far more abundant ; a certain Behinen Mirza, the present Sardar, and brother of the Shah, being in financial difficulties, having caused three thousand of the finest trees to be cut down, and sold at a toman a piece, thus robbing the country of its finest ornaments.

During my short absence from Tabris, Mr. Bonham had procured for me, from Behinen Mirza, Sardar of Aserbeidschan, a firman, commending me to the protection and hospitality of all Persian, and even Koordish authorities and chieftains in the wild mountain districts on the Turkish border.

As an additional security, Mr. Bonham obtained me the escort of a cawass, because, though the Persian Governors have succeeded in increasing the safety of travelling, and in over-

awing the unruly mountain chieftains, yet the latter still frequently prove refractory, as is evinced by the instances of several recent murders and attacks upon Europeans. Now, as the Persian, as well as the Turkish authorities, are ambitious of making a favourable impression in the West, they are much annoyed at these accidents, and do all in their power to prevent them.

Mirza Ali, my cawass, was a raw-boned, bronzed Persian, not above the middle height, and of a far from imposing carriage. His bearded face did not even bear a trace of the cunning and dissimulation so seldom absent from Persian countenances. Nor was his dress particularly distinguished; and his only weapons consisted of a bad carbine, and a common curved sword. Yet, Mr. Bonham assured me, that the presence of this man in secluded districts, would greatly add to the influence of the firman, especially in places where the people could not read. Accordingly, I submitted to the infliction of this worthy, and the maintenance of the man and his beast, amounting to a Persian ducat daily.

The plan I had projected consisted in an

attempt to explore the districts south of the Lake Urmia, which are less correctly known than any part of Western Asia. The mountains of Turkish Koordistan project like a wedge into Persia, to the south of Sank-Bulak. This range is inhabited by nomadic, or half settled tribes of Koords, Nestorians, and Yezidees, whose name, origin, and customs, have scarcely been examined or described. Neither Ker Porter (1818), Kinneir, Frazer, or Monteith, have contributed much satisfactory information on this subject. The district, in question, is the most interesting, and problematical in this part of Asia, containing the Zagros Alps, the source of the Zab, the residence of the terrible chief of the Hakkari Koords, the great triangle between Lakes Urmia and Van, the Zab Ala, and the Tigris ; comprising in its centre, the mysterious region of Dschulamerik, with the highest icy summit of all Koordistan, besides the elevated Alpine Republic of the Tijari Chaldæan Christians, from whose southern extremity the waters flow to all points of the compass ; to the Persian Gulf, to the Tigris, Lakes Urmia and the Caspian. Beyond this territory, stretches another, which is a complete

terra incognita, a mountain district south of Lake Van, to the Alpine sources of the Zab. The latest researches of Shiel, Grant, and the American missionaries, have not cleared up its mystery ; nor are we better acquainted with the middle course of the Zab Ala, or with Rewandoz, the mysterious capital of the Hakkari Koords, unvisited hitherto by any European, and in the vicinity of which the unfortunate Professor Schulz was murdered.

I proposed to make a complete circuit of Lake Urmia, to couple with it an excursion to Southern Koordistan, to go over the Pass of Kendilan-Dagh to Suleimanieh, to visit the sources of the Zab Asfal, and thence to proceed by Rewandoz, the passes of the Dscharwur Dagb, to the town of Urmia, where I should complete my examination of the Lake. The reader will see that subsequent circumstances induced me to modify this plan.

I had hired for my journey six pack horses of an Armenian, from Erzeroum. To the south of Daschgesan, a Persian traveller joined my party, and, on a sultry August morning, I took leave of my Tabris friends, and rode through the gate of the city. The bronzed

cawass led the way, and my bearded Pole, whose head was, for the first time, adorned with a Persian kalpak, bought in the bazaar, brought up the rear.

After a ride of four hours, we reached the little village of Sirdari, containing a lively bazaar, where you could even purchase ices. The Persian head man visited me in person, and assigned me quarters in the house of the wealthiest inhabitant, who wished me to enter his dwelling; but, in dread of vermin, the invariable accompaniment of Persian divans, I preferred reclining under the umbrageous fruit trees in the garden. My courtcous host brought us a little basket, containing bread and kaimak, white mulberries, half white grapes, little apples, and excellent plums. The inhabitants of this village testified the most pressing curiosity, and besieged the entrance to the garden. Several sick persons were also announced, troubled, evidently, with incurable complaints, and whom I was obliged to dismiss with a few powders from my medicine chest. When the heat moderated, towards evening, I had the horses saddled, at the village of Ilehitschi, where I

took up my night quarters, bivouacking in a vineyard, wrapped in my burka.

The next day, we passed the large village of Mamegan, built in the form of a terrace, on a gentle declivity. The curiosity of the inhabitants was very troublesome, a travelling European being quite a *rara avis* in this district. As far as the town of Duchalchan, the country was an arid plain, without a single brook, and the cultivation was very scanty, owing to the want of irrigation. It was only close to the villages, where the artificial canals supply a little moisture, that the smallest degree of verdure appeared.

At Dulchalchan, we met with an unpleasant adventure. As our cavalcade was passing through the market-place, the Persian mob had mustered in large numbers, and saluted us with laughter and jeers. When they saw us ride on quietly, they passed to insulting language, and ultimately to a shower of pebbles. The Pole, who was wounded by a stone in the left arm, jumped off his horse, and rushed into the midst of the crowd, with his drawn sword, seizing the supposed culprit by the collar.

The mob groaned, but did not dare to rescue

the prisoner. Mirza Ali had ridden on, round the corner of the street. Hearing the tumult, we wheeled about our horses, and dashed back to help the Pole ; but our aid was not wanted, nor was it requisite to threaten this cowardly people by drawing our pistols. For, although hundreds remained in the square and streets, and continued to hoot and insult us, not one ventured to rescue the lad from the sturdy grasp of the Pole. The cawass bound the hands of the prisoner, and we led him to the Cadi, before whose open tribunal, our cavalcade halted, whilst the crowd formed a half circle, at a respectful distance, congregated in chattering groups round the house. Their anger and maliciousness seemed to have departed, and some grey beards in the mob strove to mitigate the fate of the prisoner by their intercessions. But, as the cawass informed me, that it was necessary to make an example, I entered the open tribunal.

The Cadi Mirza Tschebir, a handsome Persian, with a long beard, and distinguished attire, sat on the divan, in the full consciousness of his dignity, and was then engaged in deciding a case. When he saw me stride over his embroidered carpet, in my high Georgian riding-

boots, and in my singular costume, his face became clouded, for, according to Persian custom, the floor of tribunals must only be trod by slipperless feet. But, scarcely had the Cadi cast his eye over my firman, ere his sinister expression dissolved in a bland smile. He directed the litigants to be brought up, and attended immediately to our suit. After the Pole had related the occurrence, and had shown his wounded hand to the Cadi, the latter said to me: "The people in this district are a bad set. The Feringhi must not suppose that we scruple to cut off ears, or use the lash. But new crimes continually occur, notwithstanding any amount of executions."

On uttering these words, Mirza Tschibir cast a terrible look at the criminal, who was grappled fast by the arm by a tschausch. The young man was pale, trembling and weeping. I had pity on the poor devil, whose guilt could not even be accurately determined, because a score of pebbles had been thrown by the people, and it was not certain who had hit my servant. When the cawass had corroborated the statement of the Pole, the Cadi gave a nod, and uttered some unintelligible words to an atten-

dant. But the criminal seemed to comprehend them, lamented violently, and begged for mercy. It appears that his ears were in danger, and that a practised tschausch, with a sharp knife, stood ready to execute the commands of the Cadi. I, of course, protested vehemently against the sentence, and the Pole was obliged to interpret my lecture to the Cadi, about the inhuman nature of such a style of punishment. Mirza Tschebir listened to it very quietly, and contented himself with replying, "that every country has its own jurisprudence, and that these severe measures were necessary to keep the people in order. He did not appear displeased, however, at a mitigation of the verdict, which he had, probably, delivered out of respect for the firman, and for fear of complaints at Tabris, rather than from a love of justice. The young delinquent seemed wealthy enough to purchase the immunity of his ears, by a gift of tomans; and the affair, probably, terminated in a mulct. At all events, I left the tribunal, requesting the Cadi to examine into the affair, and not to do anything contrary to our European notions of humanity.

• We continued our journey; and, after a ride

of two hours, we arrived at the foot of the Nedili-Dagh, a western outlier of the Sahant ridge. The summit of the mountain presents a beautiful and extensive panorama, of a most picturesque character. The eye embraces almost the entire area of the great salt basin of Lake Urmia, with the eccentric appearance of its shores, the lofty snowy ridges inclosing the salt-laden plains of Aserbeidschan, with their numerous villages and towns, their exuberant gardens, and melancholy solitudes. The most beautiful effect was produced by the Island of Schahi, with its picturesquely-shaped, rocky peaks, towering above the bluish-green waters, in the form of sharp pointed crests. Viewed on this side, the island presented a striking similarity to the Island of Capri, the beauty of Naples, whose picturesque outline is appreciated by all landscape painters. The plain on the east side of the Schahi Island was covered with a crust of salt, an inch-and-a-half in thickness, and I could see, through the telescope, people from the island riding to the market-place at Tabris, their horses appearing to sink, knee-deep, in the salt marsh. The level of the lake had fallen half a foot, during my short stay at Tabris.

On the evening of the same day, we reached the village of Daschgesan, a short mile from the lake, and situated close to the celebrated marble quarries, which yielded the most splendid building material of all Persia and Western Asia. The petrifying springs yielding this substance, gush forth in a small plain, four miles in circumference, containing, besides Daschgesan, the villages of Scheramin-Koi, and Chanajeh-Koi, amidst fertile fields, yielding good crops of wheat, rice, cotton, and sesamum (*ricinus*). The neighbourhood of the lakes and springs is sterile, and Daschgesan, where I staid a week, is the smallest village, only reckoning twenty miserable houses, a patch-work of tufa-stone, and fragments of marble, stuck together with mud.

The vicinity of Daschgesan presents some of the most interesting and puzzling geological phenomena with which I am acquainted, but I cannot dwell on them here. A careful survey of the district, satisfied me that the marble strata are an ancient deposit of the springs, which have still a feeble tendency to create the same result, but no longer produce any sensible effects. The marble which is found mixed with tufa-stone, varies greatly in colour, design, and

beauty. The handsomest varieties are milk-white, lemon-coloured, or pink. Occasionally it took the form of stalactites, a later formation, fringing the lower edge of the tufa strata, and caused by the filtering of the springs through its pores. The marbles are generally transparent when held to the sun, and their value increases in proportion to their transparency.

The most probable thing respecting the formation of the marble is advanced by the American Hitchcock, who suggests that the whole country about Lake Urmia, is essentially volcanic, hence that it was the seat of fire-worship, that the thermal springs were probably much hotter at one period, or at certain intervals, during which they had the faculty of depositing marble. Yet, I admit that the matter is still a problem.

I was never able to approach within fifty paces of the lake, owing to its marshy yielding bank, and after I left Daschgesan, continuing my journey along the southern shore of the lake, I endeavoured on all occasions, to come as near this Persian Dead Sea as possible. After a ride of three hours, we left behind us the bald stony mountains, and entered a broad

cheerful plain, covered with villages and cultivation. The little town of Binab, which has a tolerably lively bazaar, and is encompassed with orchards and vineyards, was our evening resting-place, after a ride of eight hours. We had not traversed a single stream, during the whole distance from Daschgesan to Binab. All the water descending from the Sahant ridge on this side is diverted by husbandmen, who use it to irrigate the land. As far as the little river Maragha, south of Binab, not a single rivulet of the Sahant chain reaches Lake Urmia in the dry summer months, all being diverted from their natural course into artificial canals. All my attempts to reach the banks of the lake were defeated, owing to the salt mud covering them.

At Binab, we found a very hospitable reception, delicious roast lamb, excellent pilaf, and tolerably savoury fruit. The Persian host, who gave us his company by the kitchen fire, advised us to take every precaution the following day, when after crossing the Dschagatu river, we should enter the genuine Koordish territory, and lay claim to the hospitality of wild and almost independant nomadic clans.

The report of the latest tragedy in the Christian highlands of Dschulamerik, of the triumphs and atrocities practised by the chieftains, Nurullah Beg and Beder Khan, over the unfortunate Nestorians, had penetrated even to this district. The turbulent and thievish character of the border Koords had become spread far and wide by these transactions. The Persian tax-gatherers found it difficult to levy tribute, even among the nearest Koordish tribes, whilst the clans and tribes above Sauk-Bulak refused to pay anything, and threatened the Sardar that they would join the Hakkari, with whom they had hitherto lived in constant feuds.

CHAPTER VII.

From Binab to Persian-Koordistan — Daschagatu River — Scenery — A Night among Koordish Nomads — Characteristics of the Koords — The Southern Banks of Lake Urmia — A Bird Chase — Sauk Bulak — Condition of Koordistan — Ride to Serdascht and return to Sauk-Bulak — Balista — Babari — The inhospitable Nestorian — Turcoman — An Adventurer among Persian Women.

WE started for Koordistan on the 19th of August, considerably depressed by the narratives of our Persian host at Binab, relating to the threatening attitude of the tribes, and the fanatical excitement developed in all the Koords on both sides of the Zagros ridge, by the victories of the Hakkari and Buhdan clans over the Nestorian Christians. I arranged our little cavalcade in such wise, that Mirza Ali, who had possession of the firman, was always obliged to

ride some distance a-head with the guide, so as to hold parley with the Koords we might meet this side of the Dschagatu, to show them the peaceful nature of our journey, and the authority under which we travelled. The Pole, Saremba, and the Armenian, Pilosch, were to keep by the horses, and never lose sight of them, while the Persian, who joined us at Binab, closed up the rear. I found it expedient, on my own part, to ride frequently aside, and reconnoitre the country, and as I had the best horse, I could easily stay behind the caravan to make observations. But I never parted with my gun. Ere we left Binab, all our fire-arms were carefully examined, for it is well known, that the Koords hold nothing more in awe, than European arms, with which they made unpleasant acquaintance in the Russo-Persian war, and to which they had nothing to oppose, but bamboo lances and bad matchlocks. The Koords are sharp observers and good judges, and are clever in weighing chances and profit against loss. Unless the scale descends heavily in favour of the former, the traveller has not very much to fear among the tribes, partially subject to Persian and Turkish authority, though the feeling of security is never complete in Koordistan.

To the south of Binab, a solid bridge with five arches, carries you over the Maragha, a stream which is reported in spring, to fill the whole of its bed, and to rage furiously, but which is so dry in autumn, that it scarcely sends down any water to the lake. After a ride of three hours, we reached the banks of the Dschagatu, which rises in mountains higher than the Sahant, situated to the south, and forming a continuation of the Zagros chain. This river, after flowing for the space of about one and a half degrees of latitude, falls into the southern marshes of Lake Urmia, and it still forms the principal limit between the tribes speaking Koordish, most of whom are Sunnites, and the Turkish speaking tribes of Aserbeidschan, who are, commonly, Shiites. Though belonging to the same race, the villages of these opposite sects of Moslems, seldom admit members of the opposite creed among them, though both parties allow a large admixture of Chaldæan Christians, and Devil-worshipping Yezidees. I halted on the right bank of the river, and whilst men and cattle were taking refreshment, I bathed in the stream, which had still a

good amount of water, but which could be easily waded in most parts. After a short rest, we crossed the border river of Persian Koordistan, and the scenery changed character directly. Even viewed from Daschgesan, the Alpine Lake, though its Eastern shore is a dreary solitude, yet it is of a very picturesque character. But after passing the Dschagatu, the scenery becomes continually more desolate, and near the Takan rivulet, flowing farther to the south-east, these swampy bottoms present a most gloomy monotony.

After we had ridden about three hours, without meeting a single person, we beheld, at length, some black tents, in the distance, surrounding ruinous buildings, and a band of Koordish horsemen returning from the pastures, with their herds. The black Persian lambswool caps had disappeared, and we were again brought in contact with bright coloured fur caps, and fiery red turbans.

The lynx eyes of the Koords appeared to have already discerned us, before we had caught sight of their tents. A magnificent chieftain, with a noble profile, a bushy raven black beard, and a prodigious load of variegated shawls

wound round his fur cap, rode down with some horsemen to meet the cawass. Whilst Mirza Agassi was parleying with them, I counted the pack horses, and contemplated the group with my telescope, at the distance of one hundred paces. To my annoyance and surprise, I observed that the behaviour of the cawass, was as cringing as that of the chieftain was haughty and supercilious. Mirza Agassi held in his hand the firman, which the Koord could not read, and the seal of which and signature he carefully scrutinized. After an interview of a quarter of an hour, Mirza Agassi rode back to us, and assured me that Kamir-Aga, the nephew of the real chieftain of the clan, bade us welcome in his uncle's name. He added, that we could now confidently rely on the hospitality of the Koords. For it is well known that these thievish shepherds, respect, like all Orientals, the sacredness of guests in their tents. When we hear of robberies and murders, in Koordistan, we may be sure, that here, as in Armenia and among the Bedouins, they never take place in the villages, or near the

tents, but on the roads, where the sacred rights of hospitality do not extend.

The aged chieftain, Schader Aga, a man far advanced in years, with a wan withered face, received us in the midst of the assembled population, with the usual dignity, never absent from Easterns in authority, even though they be barbarians and robbers. Carpets and pillows had just been spread on the ground for our reception, and the chieftain pointed to us, with polite gestures, to be seated, but intimated to me previously, to pull off my boots, according to the usage of the country. Though I was very reluctant to sit down, for fear of the vermin, which fill the furniture, clothes and hair of Koords, even more than of Persians, I thought it necessary to yield, and not to affront these savages. The stern look, and rough guttural tones of the old grey beard, who was still a sturdy man, though almost stone deaf, had nothing very reasoning about them. The Pole found it at first, very difficult to carry on intercourse with the old chief, in Turkish, and the services of the cawass, who knew

a little Koordish, had to be occasionally resorted to. I soon ascertained that we were brought in contact with the Mukri Koords, old friends of Ker Porter, who had visited them thirty years before. As a matter of personal security, I was obliged, like the British traveller, to play the part of a hakhim, in order not to make these people suspicious about the object of my journey. A physician disposed to distribute his physic, and to search for healing mineral streams, gratis, is never an unwelcome guest among the Koords, for though this people are commonly healthy and muscular, they are as subject to disease, as the Bedouins of the Desert, and the Swiss on their Alps.

Scarcely had I opened my chest, ere I was applied to by a host of patients. Many were afflicted with incurable maladies, but even a Koordish woman, who had been completely lame for ten years, and who was carried to me on the brawny arms of her sons, hoped still to obtain new legs, by some miraculous mixture of the Feringhi doctor. I was obliged to give her some strong preparation, to quiet her importunity. Every real or imaginary

patient was immediately satisfied, when he received pills or powders from the medicine chest. Even aged men, suffering from the decay of nature, pressed my hand gratefully, and gave me their blessing in Koordish, when they had sucked down two drops of essence of peppermint on sugar, and had experienced its comfortable effects on the stomach.

Whilst I was engaged in distributing the physic, the old Schader Aga, had carefully observed me with his sharp, stern eyes. When all had been dismissed, he said to the Pole: "I think that God hath sent thy Lord the hakhim to me, to help me to recover my hearing. Let him try his art. We will gladly keep you with us, so long as you like. We will prepare kaimak daily for thy Lord, and roast a lamb every Friday. Nor shall you others want for pilaf and yaourt, or your horses for good fodder."

The Pole interpreted to me the wishes, and invitation of the chief, and returned him my thanks, with the remark that European medicine, notwithstanding the great confidence placed in it in the East, has not yet devised any means of curing the deafness of a feeble old man of

eighty. But Schader Aga was not at all satisfied with this rejoinder, and thought that my well filled medicine chest, must contain some specific for deafness. He became continually more pressing in his demands, promised us a freshly slaughtered lamb, and savoury kewab for supper, and at length threatened, not to let us go, without our finding a cure for his hard hearing.

We, therefore, proceeded to consult together, and hoped to rid ourselves of the troublesome importunity of the old Koord, by an innocent expedient. At my suggestion, the Pole stopped his ears with wool steeped in olive oil, after I had previously told him in a loud voice, that during the first part of the treatment, I prescribed, he would not hear at all well, but that on persevering with it, he would find a decided improvement. A couple of spoonsful of the best cordial that I had, mixed with *eau sucrée* made the old man tolerably contented. He assured us in the evening, that he already detected a better appetite, and hoped it was the sign of an improvement in his deafness. On hearing this, we had some difficulty in preserving our gravity, and the Pole was once

very near betraying our deception to the physic loving chief, by an untimely explosion of mirth.

After we had sat some hours together, and had smoked the *tschibouk* of peace, the excessive curiosity of the Koords diminished a little. The *cawass* and the Pole inquired about the road, through the passes of the *Serdascht* mountains, forming to the S. West of *Sauk Bulak*, the outliers of a southern branch of the *Zagros* chain, and which we proposed to cross in a few days, in order to reach the territory of the *Hakkari*. *Kamir Aga*, the nephew of the old Koord, and his heir presumptive, as the chief had no children, described the country as most dangerous, and the *Hakkari* and *Rewan-doz* tribes, as most ferocious and blood-thirsty, advising us strongly not to attempt to penetrate through those passes.

When I returned from a short walk, I found *kewab* and *pilaf* prepared, and my people awaiting my arrival with greedy, hungry looks. The old chief reproached me for having wandered so far alone. He intimated that he was not only answerable for my safety to the *Sardar*, but also to God. He stated that there were

not only many wild beasts in this country, but bad men who have no scruple to take the life of a single wanderer. On my replying, that I trusted, next to my good star, in my faithful gun, the old man wished to see a specimen of my marksmanship. I showed him some snipes that I had shot, which excited the wonder of the Koords, as not perceiving the shot holes, they thought I must have hit them with bullets, in their tortuous flight. When I hit a slender tree at thirty paces, with my pistol, young and old joined in their applause. Kamir Aga begged me to give him my pistol, and when I told him I could not spare so useful a weapon in my travels, I was obliged to promise to send him a pair from Europe; for which he was ready to pay any price.

The evening terminated with a general prayer. Old Schader Aga ascended the little tower of the ruinous house, which stood in the middle of the camp, and judging from its substantial architecture, was of very ancient date. The aged chieftain, who acted at once the part of Muezzin, and Mollah, summoned his congregation, with the loudest efforts of his roaring bass voice, to devotion, then

descended the tower, and recited the prayer, standing with uncovered feet on the carpet, facing the south. The whole male population of the camp followed his example, and the ceremony was repeated in the morning at sunrise. Even if we had slept sounder after the exertions of the day, the thundering voice of Schader Aga, resembling the howling cry of the dromedary, would have effectually roused us.

After the conclusion of the morning prayer, there was great movement in the camp. The young Koords drove the cattle to pasture, after the operation of milking had been accomplished by the women. The horned cattle looked small and thin. Six Koordish cows scarcely yield as much milk as a good Unterwalden cow in Switzerland; nor is the milk here half as savoury as in the Alps; at the same time, the cattle of this country are more hardy, and procure their own fodder in winter by scraping the snow. Few Koords practice hay-making, nor do they ever keep their cattle in stables.

Schader Aga was in excellent temper, in the morning. The Pole had drawn the wool out of his ears, and the old chief fancied that he

already heard decidedly better than the day before. We were obliged to leave him a supply of wool and oil, and the old fellow besought me urgently for a bottle of that wonderful elixir, which had done his stomach so much good the day before, and had nerved his aged limbs with new life. As a bribe, he laid before us the remains of our supper, and caused coffee to be prepared for us, but begged us to give some sugar to sweeten it.

The impudent obtrusiveness of the Koords, was, this morning, more annoying even than the previous evening. They not only wanted medicines, but bottles, and boxes with them, and testified no gratitude for any presents. Kamir Aga, who had hitherto abstained from importuning us, when he saw the wonders performed in the case of his uncle, confided to my interpreter, that he was suffering from a certain physical debility, and wished to increase his powers by some means. When you contemplated the splendid athletic figure (above six feet high), of this Koord, who was in the prime of life, and seemed scarcely forty years of age, (no Koord knows his age exactly), you could not avoid astonishment at this confession. I recom-

mended him the use of baths in the salt and iodine waters of the Lake Urmia. This simple treatment did not appear to satisfy the chief. He had spoken to me the previous evening of a mineral spring, which coloured the surrounding ones red, and probably contained oxyde of iron. He now proposed to me, to accompany me to this spring, as I had raised his hopes of recovering his pristine vigour by the use of this kind of water. He described the spring, as situated aside from Tasch Tebe, half way to Sauk Bulak. I accepted this proposal, and after my people and horses had breakfasted, I rode off with him and another Koord, in a south-westerly direction.

Our farewell to the Mukri nomads, and old Schader Aga, was very characteristic of Koordish ways. I offered him four sahefgerans, as a compensation for his hospitality, not so much from generous motives, as to test the delicacy and hospitable feeling of a Koordish chieftain. It was amusing to observe the comical expression of the old man's face, betraying the conflict between the commands of religion, the consciousness of his duties as host, and the meanest avarice, and love of lucre. He and his

people had emptied a good part of my medicine chest, and conceived that they had derived from me mixtures of wonderful healing virtues. It was evident, after that, that the old Koord had not expected an additional compensation for his somewhat shabby entertainment. Hence, the surprise was all the more agreeable. At first, he pretended not to accept my offer. But, whilst he rejected it with his hands, and some unintelligible words, his eye became rivetted still more greedily on the four silver pieces. At length, he mechanically stretched forth his withered hand, as though impelled, by some irresistible power, and the silver instantly disappeared in the ample folds of his caftan.

The two Koords led us by an abominable road, through endless morasses, without a trace of a beaten track. Lofty marsh plants, reeds and broom, sometimes overtopped the horse-men's heads, and excluded all prospect of the plain. Whilst the Koords carried on an unintelligible dialogue in their tongue, Kamir Aga's hawk's eyes were so often fixed on the pack horses, that dark suspicions were excited in me, and in my people. Being perfectly ignorant of the localities, we were entirely in the power

of these barbarians, and were constantly afraid of being enticed into an ambush, where there would have been no escape. As we were so small a body, notwithstanding our superior fire-arms, we could have offered no effectual resistance to a large force of Mukri Koords. They might have thrown our bodies into the neighbouring marsh, without leaving a trace of the crime, and the Sarder Behman Mirza, however well-intentioned, might have been quite unable to avenge our death. After we had ridden for two hours through the marsh, which is tolerably well-defined in the map, between Tasch Tebe and Terochsad, to the south of Sauk Bulak, our horses waded, breast deep in the water, and we attacked our guides with bitter reproaches, for having brought us into this dismal wilderness. The reedy thickets were here so dense, that all view was entirely shut out; and, I confess, that I have never seen in all my travels, any uglier country than these muddy parts, to the south of Lake Urmia.

At length, our indefatigable horses worked through the wet, reedy thickets, and we came to a tolerably dry meadow, with a free prospect

of the south-west mountains of Koordistan, and of the wide marshy plain, reaching to the banks of the lake, which we were prevented from seeing by a low range of hills, checking the course of the waters, and causing these marshes.

Ere we reached the place designed by Kamir Aga, we were joined by two other mounted Koords. This unexpected meeting with two other long-lanced warriors in the pathless waste, increased our suspicions. When the Koords began to curvet on their steeds, and to wheel round our pack horses in narrowing circles, and with loud shouts, though it was, probably, only to display their horsemanship, I told the Pole to be on his guard. During his many years' experience of Eastern life, he had learnt to mistrust the natives, and feared, like myself, that the Koords might, at any moment, convert this comedy into something serious. Suddenly, Kamir Aga, spurring his grey mare into a swift gallop, dashed, with lance in rest, towards the Pole, who presented his double-barrelled piece at the Koords, as if he wished to join in the fun. Kamir Aga, thereupon, broke into a hearty laugh, wheeled round his horse, and

dashed, full speed, pointing his lance at me. I presented both my pistols at him, quick as light, showing the Koords, that both myself and the Pole were quite prepared to convert the joke into a serious matter, if they thought fit. With screams of laughter, the Koords dropped their lances, and swept round our caravan again in wide circles. The whole display presented a considerable analogy to the fantasia of the Bedouins in Algeria, who had often delighted me with their picturesque displays. Kamir Agar looked also, very splendid, with his handsome, energetic face, and aquiline profile, reminding me of the handsome hero of Caucasia. The Koordish chieftain was not inferior to the most imposing warriors I had seen in the Atlas and Caucasus, in horsemanship, war-like bearing and picturesque draping of his ample cloak. His companions appeared to less advantage. A common type is wanting in the Koordish physiognomy, and everything seems to point to a strong mixture of races, as with the Kabyles of the Atlas.

At length, we reached the spot where a fine chalybeate spring gushes from the soil. The surrounding soil was tinged with a yellowish

red deposit of oxyde of iron, which occurred in such abundance in the water, that two moderate glasses gave me a headache. I caused the pack-horses to be relieved of their burdens, and turned loose to feed ; but I cautioned my people to be on their guard. This spot was beset by hosts of birds of many varieties, which were so tame, that they had probably never heard a shot fired. At the first report, which brought down one, there was some confusion ; but it was only after the second shot had deprived of life another, that they flew away amazed and screaming. The Koords never kill any bird ; and, thinking that I fired with ball, they made me undeserved compliments. I left them purposely in error.

Kamir Aga, who had taken large draughts of the spring water, in hopes of increasing his procreative powers, now took leave of me, and returned to the camp with his Koords. He informed the Pole, that he had shared in the last Russo-Persian campaign, and had commanded the cavalry of the Mukri clan. At that period, the severe government of Feth-Ali-Shah, and of the chivalrous Allah Mirza, had secured greater respect and obedience

among the wild border tribes, than the present imbecile ruler and administration.

From Kember-Koi (the name of this district) we rode through a pathless waste, to Sauk Bulak. It is only in the vicinity of this capital of Persian Koordistan, that the country becomes somewhat more agreeable. The marshy plain passes gradually into a dry hilly country, and the mountain streams flow in regular channels. Sauk Bulak lies at the southern end of a green valley, contains about six hundred poor stone hovels, and a population of two thousand souls, most of them of Koordish descent. The number of Nestorians amounts scarcely to fifty families. During the absence of the chief Abdullah Khan, absent on a pilgrimage to Mecca, the administration was in the hands of an old Mollah, who was not very hospitably inclined. He quartered us in the miserable house of a Nestorian; and though he could read my firman, he would do nothing to forward my plans. It was my purpose to advance from Sauk Bulak to Tokta and Jeltomar, and to the Serdascht mountains, there to take a strong escort, and go over the Darn pass to the mountain village of Runemassi, situated in an

elevated valley near the source of the Zab-Asfal. Thence I proposed to push through the *terra incognita*, to the Northern Hakkari district, and to the Zab Ala, proceeding through Rewandoz and the passes of the Dschawur Dagħ, and returning to the west bank of Lake Urmia. *

The chief of Sauk Bulak, to whom I imparted this plan, pronounced it impracticable. The menaces of the Pacha of Mossul, because of the overbearing attitude of Beder Khan, who seemed to aim at an independent sovereignty in Koordistan, had alarmed all the tribes. Nurullah Beg, the chief of the Hakkaris, who had persuaded Beder Khan to make his incursion into Dschulamerk, was afraid of the Turkish Nizam, who could reach the Zab Ala in two days march, and advance thence easily to Rewandoz. These threatening reports had increased the naturally and proverbially savage and surly character of the Hakkaris. The Mollah said, that all travellers, even from Persia, would be regarded as Turkish intruders, and cut down; and he added, that all the excitement in the whole district was so great, that a journey over the Darn pass, even with

a strong escort, would be a dangerous exploit.

My interpreter obtained information from the Nestorians and Armenians of the town, which confirmed the statements of the Mollah. They represented that the country had formerly been more tranquil, but that no Christian native had of late passed through the Hakkari territory to Rewandoz. The only mode of intercourse between them and their fellow-believers in the Hakkari land, whose Patriarch holds sway over all the Persian Nestorians, was the pass of Dschawur Dag, to the northwards. Mirza Ali heard the same statement from the Koords of the town, who represented the Darn pass as very dangerous.

The following morning, I resolved to make a reconnoissance to the foot of the Serdascht mountains, led by a Nestorian, and escorted by six Koordish lancers. I was accompanied also by the gallant Saremba, who said he was ready to face any dangers ; nor can I sufficiently praise the fidelity of this brave fellow, whose services I recommend to future travellers attempting to unravel the mysteries of Koor-distan.

The mountains near Sauk Bulak lack vegetation. There are no woods, and little verdure. We passed the night between Beiran and Hassan Agas, in the tents of a small Koordish encampment of the Bilbos tribe. They were poor people, who had nothing to offer us but yauert. Their faces were very wild and ugly; and their attire very ragged. Our Koordish escort gave us a feeling of sufficient security. We also became gradually accustomed to the thievish look of the natives, without always suspecting evil intentions. These shepherds could give us no information respecting the state of the country, the other side of the mountains. The next day, after a ride up a steep declivity, we reached the ruinous border fort of Serdascht, whose commandant, Abas Khan, a Koord, annually supplies escorts for Suleimanieh.

This fort lies on the green slope of a mountain of the same name, on the left bank of the Ak-su rivulet. Abas Khan showed himself ready to give me an escort of ten horsemen, who would guard me safely over the mountains. But he also told me, that it was impossible to penetrate into the valleys north of the Zab Asfal, through the Hakkari district

to Rewandoz. He added, that the Hakkāris robbed and murdered even men of their own faith; much less would they spare Christians. When I found it impracticable to proceed to the north-west, I resolved to give up my attempt to visit Suleimanieh, to return to Sauk Bulak, and thence cross to the south-west bank of the Lake Urmia.

When we returned, the next day, to the Koordish capital, we found my Persian and Armenian at table, in the house of my Nestorian host. Neither of them had neglected his inner man; and the poor Nestorian, who had scarcely enough to support himself and his family, complained of their dreadful appetite. My host, even the evening before my departure, expressed very frankly his anticipation, that I should make him a handsome present for his compulsory hospitality. The cawass feigned great delight at my safe return, adding shrewdly, "For who would have paid me the toman for my services, if the Koords had murdered thee?"

The following day we proceeded in a north-westerly direction, and after a ride of four hours, we beheld once more, the surface of

Lake Urmia, presenting a brilliant reflection of the blazing mid-day sun, in the slightly undulated mirror of its thousand waves. We came here close to the bank, and I was able to make some observations on its formation, and on the shells cast up by the lake.

We passed the night in the village of Balista, two miles from the lake. Part of the village is built on the slope of a mountain, surrounded with walls, and forms a kind of fortress. We again saw here, for the first time, some fine tall timber. The landscape of this basin, is adorned with thick stemmed mulberry trees, shooting up in mighty shafts, and extending their giant branches over head. The view is fine and open, on the side of the lake. Most of the inhabitants are Koords, and there are about fifty families of Persians, who speak Turkish, for the nearer you approach the town of Urmia, the more does the Koordish population give way to Persians and Nestorians. The pastures on the mountains, become here more scarce, but cultivation increases in the plains. The other side the river Burrandusz, the wild faces and picturesque costume of the Koords, disappear in the plains, and only

occur in the higher ridges of the border mountains of Persia and Turkey. The Burrandusz forms the western, and the Dschagatu, the south-west boundary of Persian Koordistan. The Koordish tribes of this district, really or nominally subject to Persia, are geographically connected with their countrymen and clansmen, in the broad Turkish district, between the Tigris, Lakes Van and Urmia and the southern plains of Mesopotamia. The Koordish nationality is almost predominant, in this extensive territory. But in Eastern Aserbeidschan, the Koordish population is more scattered, forming, as it were, islands surrounded by the Turkish and Persian races.

After passing the Burrandusz-tschai, the great fertile plain of Urmia presented itself in its most blooming attire. All the villages were enclosed by a broad garland of trees and fields. We halted for our noon siesta, at the village of Barbari, in a charming situation, close to the Dschagatu. The larger half of the population, consists of Nestorians, the minority being formed by Armenians and Chaldæan Catholics. We were not amicably

received by the population, and a Nestorian, in whose shady garden we wished to repose, refused down-right to receive us. This was the first inhospitable behaviour I had to complain of, since quitting Tabris. Even the wild Sumnite Koords ; had given us a ready shelter under their tents ; whilst here, Christians would not even let us rest under their trees.

Mirza Ali cut the matter short, by quietly thrashing the Nestorian with his whip, and then showing him the firman of the Sardar. Henceforth, indeed, the cawass displayed a certain brutality, which, occasionally, called for my serious interference. He had, generally, behaved politely to the Persians on the Eastern bank, and his conduct was even cringing towards the half independant Koords. But he seemed inclined to make amends for his previous self-command, and to gratify his Persian love of cudgelling, on the oppressed Christians of the Urmia plain.

It must be owned, that this uncouth treatment, had a good effect upon the Nestorian. He became suddenly cringing and fawning, and not only allowed us to rest

in his garden, but brought us his fruit for our refreshment. He sought to excuse his previous uncivil behaviour, by pleading the frequent and oppressive visits of Persian functionaries. He said that they never expected to receive any compensation from them. Indeed, the people were generally happy, when those unwelcome guests took leave, after satisfying their appetite, without damaging the garden, or insulting their host. He ended by saying, that they were riddled with taxes, and that he had to pay forty tomans yearly, to the Persian grandees, for the rent of his orchard.

When the heat had somewhat moderated in the afternoon, we rode off to the large Persian village of Turkman, twelve miles south of Urmia, and situated among charming vineyards and orchards. We stopped there for the night, taking up our quarters in the garden of a wealthy Persian. The trees were bent under the weight of savoury apples, which were of moderate size, but of delicious taste. I here met with an adventure, which formed a somewhat entertaining variety, in our rather monotonous wandering life.

After consuming my pilaf, I lay, wrapped in my burka, half dozing, when I was roused by the sobbing and sighing of a man, whose figure I could not well recognize in the dark. At first, I did not notice the matter, and hoped the noise would soon cease. But when the sounds of lamentation increased, I called my interpreter, to learn the man's trouble. The Pole informed me, that he was the son of my Persian host, whose wife was at the point of death. They had heard of the arrival of a Frank hakhim, and nothing but a shy reserve had deterred the Persian from disturbing my rest, and begging me to accompany him to his house. I followed the man readily, as I hoped, by this accident, to view the interior of a Persian harem. The Pole had to bring my medicine chest with us, and we followed the young weeping Persian into the inner court of a house, where there stood a group of female forms, of various ages, in handsome domestic attire, surrounding an apparently fainting woman, lying stretched on a carpet and pillows, with closed eyes. She was a very pretty young woman, twenty years old at most,

and a roll of variegated silk was wound round the graceful tresses of her long hair, only concealing her forehead. Singularly enough, her complexion was not pale, as commonly with those in a swoon, and her pulse beat regularly. I caused iced water to be brought, an article seldom wanting in Persian houses, sprinkled the pretty face of the fainting woman with it, and held at the same time, a bottle of spirits of sal ammoniac under her nose.

At the same moment, the fainting woman opened her black eyes, jumped up in terror, and, with a loud cry, covered her face when she beheld two strange men in their singular costume. An old woman tore away the veil from the young woman, and addressed her in an animated tone, saying: that she ought to show her face to the stranger, who was a hakhim. The other women smote their breast, exclaiming, God has sent this hakhim to us to save her ! All, including the men of the family, seemed almost to think it a resurrection from the dead, though they might easily have employed the same simple treatment themselves, which so soon brought back the patient to her senses.

The pretty patient looked at us still very shyly, with her timid gazelle eyes, but did not oppose my taking her pretty little hand, to feel her pulse.

I caused them to give her another glass of iced water, and then left them, after thus easily earning their profound gratitude. We returned to repose sweetly through the mild August night in the apple garden. Pilosch and the cawass, who had already heard of the medical miracle, filled their bags with splendid apples, which they regarded as a just contribution for the advantage our host had derived from my curative skill.

CHAPTER VIII.

Arrival at Urmia—The American Missionaries—Residence at Seir—Excursion to the Border of Koordistan—Visit to the West Bank of the Lake—Monuments of the Fire Worshippers—The Nestorians—The Destruction of the Nestorian Republic in Dschulamerik — An Episode of recent History in the East.

WE reached the town of Urmia, which gives its name to the great lake, the following day at an early hour. The Beg quartered us at the house of a Nestorian woman, whose husband was absent on business at Tabris. Urmia, is a considerable town, containing 30,000 inhabitants, chiefly Persians, and in a pleasing situation. It is encompassed by walls and beautiful orchards, which penetrate even into the heart of the town, and separate the houses from each other. The bazaar is lively, but far inferior to that of Tabris in size, variety of goods, and entertaining

sights. The town appears deficient in antiquities. Its early history is obscure, but Abulfeda mentions it as an important city.

Since 1831, North American missionaries have settled at Urmia, not to convert Mahommedans, (all who know the East are aware that this is impossible,) but to disseminate their doctrine among the Chaldean Christians, including under this term the Nestorians, and the united Chaldeans. The American missionaries were followed by the French lazzarists, who remarked that the West bank of Lake Urmia, was a promising field for the propaganda. The apostolic activity of Pater Garzoni had already embraced a great part of Western Asia, and had wrought great effects there. The Protestant missionaries of Basle had also made attempts to evangelize the Chaldeans, but appear to have been sooner discouraged than the North Americans, not having renewed their attempt since the departure of Haas, Horle, and Schneider, in 1837.

Scarcely had the American missionaries heard of my arrival, ere they invited me to visit them at their summer residence. The bearer of the message was a German, who had almost

lost the use of his mother tongue, during his protracted peregrinations in the East. He had brought a handsome horse provided for me by the Mission, and the spirited animal carried me at a merry gallop, beside my guide, to the missionary residence.

Scir, the summer residence of the Americans, is scarcely four miles from Urmia, in a very picturesque and charming situation. The dwelling consists of a uniform building of one story, about fifty paces in length, not unlike a barrack, inclosed by a wall flanked with four towers, and covering the upper terrace of a hill, from which the eye commands a wonderful prospect of the vast, blooming plain of Urmia, with its three hundred and sixty villages, its rivers, gardens, plantations, as well as the salt lake, extending here a full degree north and south. This picture is heightened by the bold chain of mountains advancing or receding from the lake, and of which the Eastern and Western chains attain an Alpine height, being covered with snow most of the year. The outer wall of the residence incloses, moreover, a vegetable garden, orchard and vineyard, and is strong enough to defy a thousand Koords. Yet, such

a massive construction testifies to the vicinity of savage, robber hordes ; nor can the gentlemen of the mission ever feel quite secure. For, if a similar Koordish irruption to that which destroyed Dschulamerk, (1843), were to sweep over the Albur's chain, and smite the Nestorians in the Persian plains, the Beg of Urmia would be powerless to resist it. Even if the Nestorians of Urmia had time to rush to the rescue of the Mission, and to defend themselves behind its strong walls, they are too much wanting in energy, too unaccustomed to military service, and too habituated to oppression, to effect any daring exploit, or to rival the gallantry of their countrymen, the *Tijaris*, who, yet, were unable to defend themselves against the Sumnite Koords behind stone walls.

Three of the clerical inhabitants of Seir, were married, each of them enjoying the society of an agreeable wife and blooming children, who had not been robbed of the roses on their checks, by the Persian climate. Mr. Perkins seemed to be superior in character and intellect to his colleagues, who are, however, eminent for piety and virtue. Three of these, Messrs. Holtey, Stoddart and Stacking,

were at Seir, and three Messrs. Johns, Marrick, Prad, and the physician, Dr. Reith, resided at Urmia, but were then on a visit to Seir. A readier and livelier pen would be requisite to depict the charms and features of this missionary residence, its pious inmates, the amiable housewives, the lively Judith, daughter of Mr. Perkins, the Nestorian beauties of the vicinity, with their picturesque costumes and their Oriental fire-darting eyes, the cooing of the doves, the rapping of the wood-peckers, the melodious sighing of the breeze, descending from the Koordish mountains, and agitating the trees in the garden—in short, the whole idyllic scenery of this missionary dwelling, of which the impression was doubly grateful, after long tribulations among deceitful Persians and rascally Koords.

The plain of Urmia is almost fifty miles long, and eighteen broad, and the eye embraces nearly its entire surface from Seir. Its extraordinary productiveness, is secured by the abundance of waters, descending from the snowy Koordish mountains, nor have I ever seen, even in happy Lombardy, a more careful cultivation of the soil, a more judicious system

of artificial irrigation, or a denser population. The vast area presents an endless series of villages, gardens and fields, as far as the eye can reach, offering considerable analogy to the richly cultivated banks of the Lake of Zurich, though it lacks the palatial farm-houses, the cleanliness and comfort of the Swiss, as well as the blessing of their political liberty. Poverty, misery, and famine are rampant in this Persian paradise. Its unfortunate inhabitants, besides having to pay 65,000 tomans to the State Treasury, at Teheran, are fleeced by the scandalous robberies, and oppression of the Persian *employés* and nobles, to whom the caprice of the Shah assigns the villages. The poor people here as in the Nile delta, can scarcely save enough to keep their families from starving, and many are afraid to eat the eggs laid by their own hens. During an excursion that I made to the northwards, the parents refused me fodder for my horse, though their barns were full of corn, and though offered a good sum. They stated that they did not dare to give one ear of corn; before their Lord had examined, and taken his share of the harvest.

On the second day of my residence at Seir,

I made an excursion with the missionaries to the border mountains of Koordistan. All the gentlemen were capially mounted, nor have I ever seen throughout the East, a finer horse than the snow white mare, of Mr. Perkins. Each movement of the beautiful animal, which had cost a considerable sum, was full of grace. It looked to the greatest advantage, when kneeling down to drink. It showed equal expertness to the best Koordish horses, in clambering over the rocky declivities, and in the plain it left them far behind it. The missionaries who receive considerable sums from the American society, for the propagation of Christianity, not only live comfortably, but even luxuriantly, as was testified by their stables, which were almost filled with horses of all Oriental breeds.

The mountains west of Urmia, forming the watershed of the Zab, and of the tributaries of Lake Urmia, follow a south-east and north-west direction, peculiar to most mountains in Asia. The ridge is called Alburs by all the Nestorians, and its highest summit, Scheidan-Dagh, (Devil's mountain.) The Aju-Dagh, (Bear's mountain) appears the next highest

summit, and another mountain covered with a thick mantle of snow, was called Hertschin-Dagh. The greater amount of snow in these mountains, shows that they exceed in elevation the Sahant chain, cutting the blue ether with their rocky peaks, on the opposite side of Lake Urmia. Judging by the eye, the height of the Alburs ridge, must amount to 10,000 or 11,000 feet. Their lofty precipices intercepted the view of the highest mountains of Koordistan, which in the summits of the Dschidda and Dschawur-Dagh, near the border of the Hakkari Koords, and of the Chaldæan Tijari, attain from 13,000 to 14,000 feet, (according to Monteith, 15,000,) and are crowned with everlasting snow, and glaciers. This ridge forms nominally the frontier between Persia and Turkey. But the truth is, that these highest districts, as well as the more elevated uplands, including the verdant slopes and higher vallies of the Barandusz. Schaher-tschai, and Nassli-tschai, which water the plain of Urmia, together with the Northern valleys of Salmas, and the ravines watered by the tributaries of the Zab, are not inhabited by Persian or Turkish, but by free and independant Koords, settled in villages, or roving about, and

undisturbed by tax-gatherers of Pachas, or Sultans. In the deeper recesses, among the mountains, are poor villages, whose inhabitants are mostly of Affscharic descent. The Affschars, who perhaps constitute the most numerous tribe of Western Asia, speak a corrupt Turkish dialect, and probably have a principal admixture of Turkish blood in their veins, though it is most likely blended with Koordish and even Persian elements. From this race, now sunk into absolute impotence, sprang Nadir Shah, perhaps the mightiest conqueror presented in Persian history.

I must omit my geological researches in this district, which showed me the very volcanic formation of the country, and which excited much interest among the American missionaries, who accompanied me in many of my excursions. The plain of Urmia is not only intersected by minor cross ridges, and broken by solitary elevations, but it presents a series of artificial mounds, resembling the Mohills of the Russian steppes, only more capacious, and not of a conical shape. These mounds near Lake Ormia, are covered with black earth, meadows and grass. When you dig through the mould,

you discover many earthen utensils, human skeletons, and animals bones, broken pottery, copper and silver coins, mostly from the times of Roman supremacy, and a few of the Persian æra.

We visited two of these mounds near the village of Degalu. I could trace, at this place, the vestiges of grand excavations, caverns, a hundred paces in length, where it was evident that search had been made for hidden treasures. The common result of such excavations, is the discovery of some silver coins. And in the most unsatisfactory cases, the earth ashes which always occur, and are useful as manure, offer some compensation for the trouble of the excavations. The natives give no other name to these artificial mounds, than Tepe, and the current traditions refer them to Zoroaster, the Magi, and the fire-worshippers.

On the 30th of August, a boating excursion was proposed, Mr. Perkins having politely hired a boat, which, on certain days, sails from the western to the Eastern bank of Lake Urmia. The previous Governor of Urmia, Malek Kassim Mirza, a younger brother of Abbas Mirza, and uncle of Mohammed Shah,

had built the vessel at his own expense. This Persian Prince, who walked partly in the footsteps of his deceased brother, and who had acquired a taste for European institutions and fashions, spoke English and French with fluency, and was partial to intercourse with Europeans. He was a complete enigma, and I heard as much evil as good spoken of him, by the Europeans residing in Aserbeidschan. Though Malek Kassim had dropped the embroidered Persian caftan, with its hanging sleeves, and donned a scanty frock coat of European cut, he had not dismissed Eastern vices. Enlightened nobles in the East, are not unfrequently anxious and impatient to borrow our inventions, the evident wonders of our industry, even our scientific researches and speculations, and to domesticate them on Islam ground. It is only the morality of Christian Europe, the principles of humanity, of patriotism and honour, which have fundamentally done more than the Gospel, to advance the acknowledgment and practice of cultivation and freedom, in European countries; it is only these higher influences, which find no

admission in the East, and least of all among the corrupt grandees of Persia.

Some years before my visit to Urmia, Malek Kassim had been driven from his appointment, by the intrigues of his enemies at the Court of Teheran. Nothing could have saved him, but a rich present to the Grand Vizier, Hadschi-Mirza-Agassi. But the Prince had squandered all his money, partly in foolish industrial experiments, to which he had been prompted by the ignorant quacks surrounding him, partly in excesses and luxury. The poor people had been no less oppressed, misused and fleeced under this civilized Governor, than under his barbarian predecessors and followers, who did not read Lamartine's philanthropic poetry, or speak French elegantly like Malek. Almost all the technical improvements that he had introduced, were already gone to the ground, including the navigation of the lake, which had passed from bad to worse. When we reached the banks of the lake, no vessel was forthcoming. It lay at the 'Horse island,' almost in the middle of the lake, and was reported to be leaky and damaged. The

boats here in general, were described to me as clumsy, and neither safe nor swift, notwithstanding their size. Lake Urmia might easily be navigated by light boats, as its heavy salt water is only agitated by the most violent hurricanes. The breakers are reported seldom to attain the same force, nor are the waves so large as in Lake Van. The Armenian missionaries possessed a boat, which lay in the little bay, near the rocks of Besan-Dagh. When we arrived at the spot, we found nothing but a heap of ashes. The natives had set it on fire, probably to obtain its nails and iron. In this manner, our last hope of a sail had vanished away in the smoke, and we were obliged to rest satisfied with a cold bath.

If Lake Urmia were in the centre of Europe, our physicians would, probably, send thousands of their patients, who could derive no benefit from the whole pharmacopœia to Lake Urmia, and who knows if a plunge in its waters, might not renovate them. I, at all events, can affirm, from personal experience, that ten baths in the German Ocean, do not create so much stimulus in the skin, or so

much exhilaration in the nerves, as the water of this lake, which holds so much more salt and iodine in solution, than even the Dead Sea. You come out of its waters as red as a crab, and, moreover, greatly invigorated and refreshed. The Urmia baths would have this farther advantage over the North Sea, that its waves are not in the least dangerous, even in storms. For, independently of its shallowness (it is only six feet deep, two miles from shore,) so great is the gravity of the water, that the slightest movement of hand or foot, keeps you afloat. Stout men who stretch themselves full length on its surface, float without making any effort. Natives, however, are said never to bathe in the lake.

The natural character of the banks, is the same here as elsewhere. It is only in a few places that you can reach the water, without wading through dark green salt slime and plants, piled up almost all round the lake. The statement that there is no animal life in the lake, is erroneous. I admit, that neither fish nor mollusca live in its waters, but it has an immense number of crustacea, of a peculiar description. I lost all my specimens of them,

notwithstanding my care to preserve these little black creatures, which, probably, belong to a new species.

To indemnify me for my disappointment about the sail on the lake, Mr. Perkins proposed to visit the large Nestorian village of Gödipe, situated two miles from the lake. His colleague, Mr. Starking, was just engaged in preaching in the vicinity. On the way, we met a great many Nestorians engaged in reaping or thrashing the corn. They wear the Persian costume, but their sun-burnt faces appeared to me to have a gentler and more amiable expression than those of the Moslems in this country. The missionary was everywhere greeted in the most friendly manner.

The men left their work, approached us, and after laying their hands on their breast, in the Eastern fashion, answered the cordial American shake of the hands by another. Even the girls and women saluted him familiarly, but respectfully. Some of the young women, whose health and roses had not been injured or dispelled by labour and exposure, had comely forms and complexions, their sturdy beauty being enhanced by their picturesque costume.

At Gödipt, we entered the house of a priest, who seemed to be on a very intimate footing with Mr. Perkins. We were received in the most cordial manner; and all the delicacies of the Nestorian *cuisine* were laid before us. The lady priestess did not belong to the most charming of her sex; but she was an excellent cook. More attractive than our hostess was the young, blooming, classically beautiful wife of the missionary servant John, a most engaging person, not only handsome and elegant, but very richly attired. She had only enveloped her chin and lower lip in a white cloth; and we were able to make a careful scrutiny of the remainder of her face, as she waited on us most amiably; and our eyes dwelt with pleasure on her fine skin, delicate complexion, half Grecian nose, rich black tresses, and splendid eyes. Like the lady priestess, she wore an amber necklace round her neck, to which a number of Russian coins were attached. The young husband, who had accompanied us, dwells apart from his youthful bride, in the missionaries' house; but he is allowed to see her three times a-week. He seemed quite delighted to be able to pass two extra hours to-

day, with his pretty wife. Oriental jealousy does not appear to be a predominant characteristic of these Nestorians. John requested his wife to be very polite and friendly to the foreign guest. She showed me all her finery and ornaments, and gave me, as a remembrance, one article which she had embroidered with her own hands.

John was a very good-humoured young man, and appeared really pious and faithfully devoted to the missionaries, without interested motives. Europe and America were, to his mind, the promised lands, which he would gladly have visited. He confessed to me his longing to see them, and begged of me to help him to satisfy it. He would even have left his pretty wife for a couple of years, with this object. The other missionary servant, a converted Jew, who had been my guide to Seir, hinted slyly that it was not so much the devout impulse of a pilgrim, which prompted his friend John to visit Europe and Christendom, as selfishness and ambitious aspirations. He implied that the shrewd Nestorian fancied that, if he knew the English tongue better, he could play the part of Messrs. Perkins and Starking among his coun-

trymen. And surely, America's evangelical apostles, who are so splendidly remunerated, and the wealthy members of the Philadelphia and New Orleans societies, who have never yet raised their voices against negro slavery, and the hunting down of the poor red skins, by rifle shots and blood-hounds, but who pay many hundred thousand dollars to support their useless missions in the East—these inconsistent Yankees might venture the attempt to let native Orientals preach the Gospel, according to their favourite forms, and at their own cost. As a missionary servant, John was a very unimportant personage in the land. But as Missionary, and supported by the mission fund, even the higher clergy would have paid court to him, which was enough to excite the ambition of the Nestorian youth.

After our meal, we received a visit from the venerable Bishop, Mar-Ilia, who, notwithstanding his silvery beard, was still a man in the prime of life, well-conditioned, and with full ruddy cheeks. His bearing was very dignified, his eyes kindly, his manners well bred, and especially polite and attentive to the missionaries. He wore a fiery red Bishop's cap,

hanging down behind like a Capuchin's cowl, and with a variegated cloth worn round it like a turban. The rest of his dress had nothing remarkable, but consisted of fine material. Since the patriarch of Dschulamerk had sought refuge at Mossul, Mar-Ilia exercised supreme authority over the Nestorians in Persia. He had good reasons for showing civility to Mr. Perkins, and allowing him to preach, without interference, the Gospel, according to Presbyterian views, for he received a considerable subsidy from the Mission, exceeding, by twice the amount, the income he received from his congregations. The same motive applied to the priests of lower degree, whose cringing politeness to the missionaries was sufficiently explained by their poverty, their love of lucre, and their monthly salaries. I was much interested, on this occasion, in the information imparted to me by the Bishop, relating to the transactions in the Hakkari territory and Dschulamerk, and respecting the social condition of the Nestorian people.

We shall confine ourselves, for the present, to a few remarks on the Christian commonwealth, in the district of Koordistan, which had

maintained its freedom since time immemorial, among the rocky precipices of the Zab valleys, and which perished in 1843. The origin of the Nestorians, as a nation, is uncertain. The hypothesis of the Amercian missionary, Dr. Grant, (the only educated traveller who has penetrated from Mossul, through the Zab valleys, to the most inaccessible parts of the Hakkari and Dschulamerik territory), that the Chaldæan Christians are the last tribes of Israel, is deficient in authentic historical evidence. They call themselves Nassrani, often adding the epithet, Suriani, signifying Syrian Nazarenes. Professor Rödiger pronounces their language to be a common Armenian dialect, and he regards this modern Syrian as a mongrel offspring of the ancient Syriac.

The two Christian sects of the Nestorians and Jacobites in Western Persia, and Turkish Kōordistan speak this peculiar idiom, which recent researches class with the Indo-European languages, and its structure is said to be most similar to the Persian. A complete mystery envelopes the origin of this people, nor do history or tradition throw any light on the manner in which they occupied their present isolated

position, in the midst of Turkish and Koordish tribes. Plenty of theories have been hazarded on the subject. Padre Gazzoni gave us the first information of this Nestorian people. Then came Rich, Monteith, Walsh, Eli Smith, and recently Grant, to whom we may add Layard. The church of Rome styles this people Chaldæans, and it appears, that at an early period, they adopted the doctrine of Nestorius, who was deposed A.D. 1439, on account of heretical opinions. The peculiar position of their country on the borders of the Byzantine and Sassanide Empires, removed them from the influence of the great church, and they remained Nestorian heretics in their primitive form, perhaps the only sect that has retained its originality. This sect is scattered in isolated groups over a large part of Asia, almost to the borders of China. In Persia and Koordistan they appear in twelve separate districts. The most numerous tribe consist of the Tijari, in the mountain region of Hakkari, inhabited by Christian and Koordish clans, and containing the capital of the Nestorians, called Dschulamerk, to the north west of the Zab Ala, and giving its name to the whole Christian republic.

Their spiritual as well as temporal ruler, is the patriarch Mar-Schimon, who, previous to the Koordish incursion of 1843, resided at Kotsch-Hanes, four miles from Dschulamerk, and afterwards at Disz, a fortified village. Even the Persian Nestorians acknowledged him to be the head of his church. Yet the intercourse between them and the metropolis, and patriarchal see was very limited, because of the insecurity of the intervening country. The united members of the Nestorians, between the Tigris and Lake Urmia, are variously estimated ; but the American missionaries reckon them at seven thousand, of whom the Tijari composed about one half, before 1843.

There are conflicting opinions respecting the character of these Nestorians. In the highlands of Koordistan they are wild, brave, and grasping ; in fact, they resemble the Koords, amongst whom, in many places, they live intermingled. The breeding of cattle is their principal occupation. In the plain of Urmia, on the other hand, they are farmers, and have adopted under Persian sway, both the cowardly, servile, lying, and deceptive character, together with the polished, and insinuating manners of the

Persians. The American missionaries received immediately a hearty welcome from the Nestorians, because they saw that these foreigners would be a useful bulwark against the tyranny of the Persian grandees, that their reports forwarded to Tabris, and Teheran would have some weight, and that they would benefit them as protectors, or at all events, mediators in cases of extortion. Meanwhile the missionaries showered their gold with a liberal hand, and not only taught the youth gratis, but gave them a weekly gratuity. They did not interfere with the liturgy in external devotions of the Nestorians, nor sought to effect any change in their religious ceremonies ; they testified their respect for the historical character of Nestorians, of whom the clergy knew little, and the people nothing, and they made friends of the high and low clergy, by liberal donations.

The American Mission cannot boast of splendid results in relation to the improvement of morality, stimulus by virtuous examples, or the advancement of culture. Even Mr. Perkins admitted this, and thought that almost all hope must be given up, in the case of the present

generation, and that all attention should be devoted to the young. Of all the exertions of the missionaries, their gratuitous instruction of the young is least appreciated. Each bishop receives, from the Americans, a monthly allowance of three hundred Turkish piastres, and ordinary ecclesiastics from a hundred and fifty to two hundred piastres. On the condition of this allowance being continued, the Nestorian clergy permit the missionaries to preach in their villages, to keep schools, and to interpret to the youth the principles of Christian morality, which are neither taught nor practised by the native clergy. Without this payment, or bribery of the priests for a good end, the missionaries could not maintain their footing in this country. Even the peasant is only carrying on a pecuniary speculation, in sending his child to school. Each scholar receives, weekly, a sahefgeran; and though this gift is small, the schools would become directly empty, if it were to cease. The institution at Urmia, costs the North American Missionary Societies above fifty thousand dollars annually, and the maintenance of the other Missions in Turkey, three times that amount. Yet, if we except a few

Jews, won over from motives of gain, these expensive establishments have made no converts. An English clergyman, whom I once met in my travels, remarked, very justly, in connection with this matter, that the Americans might direct their efforts at conversion, with better success, and with less cost, in their immediate vicinity, among the heathen red-skins of the Far West, instead of sending their missionaries with immense sums, to the Mohammedan East, where Christianity has not gained one inch of ground in Islam. Every person acquainted with the East, is aware that all attempts to convert the Moslem, in the present day, are quite fruitless. Among the Eastern Christians, indeed, the Christian missionaries may find hearts that admire their virtues, and misery grateful for relief. But the results obtained, bear no proportion to the sacrifices that are made.

The Americans are regarded by the Christian, as well as Moslem natives, as very worthy and virtuous, but also as eccentric men; or, to speak plainly, a kind of virtuous fools, who have been impelled by a pious madness, to leave their homes, and roam over lands and seas.

It requires some time for the natives to arrive at this view of the missionaries' character, which was not unfavourable to the object of their mission. For, at first, even the Christians, including the priests, were rather shy and suspicious; and the Persians and Turks were convinced, that the foreigners only wished to conceal political objects under religious appearances, and that they were political emissaries of England. On a nearer acquaintance, and after much intercourse, these suspicions were dissipated, for the missionaries did not meddle with politics, and devoted all their spare moments to scientific pursuits. It is only among the naturally very mistrustful Persians, that all sparks of suspicion may not be even yet quite extinguished.

The American missionaries at Mossul, established an intercourse with the Nestorians of Dschulamerk, and the Hakkari territory. Dr. Grant succeeded in visiting these people in 1839, and was most hospitably entertained by the Patriarch, Mar-Schimon, in Katsch-Hanes. He even visited Dschulamerk, which was said to contain twelve thousand inhabitants. He described this "wild, but noble-minded highland

people, as at that time in the full enjoyment of liberty and consciousness of their strength. They informed Dr. Grant that no enemy had ever dared to invade their mountains; even Mohammed, and Omar, the conqueror, had not been able to penetrate into their fastnesses. He only found one wish prevalent among them all, namely, that they might be affiliated with, or incorporated in a great Christian power, which could help them with its troops. Dr. Grant was of opinion that the numbers and bravery of these Tijaris, would make them a valuable accession and acquisition. Even Ritter, after reading the report of Dr. Grant to Colonel Shiel, at Teheran, was disposed to think that this branch church and people, so neglected by its parent churches and rules, may become of great importance amidst the decay of its Moslem neighbours.

Unfortunately, recent events have not confirmed these anticipations. The chieftain of a Koordish tribe has effected what Mohammed and Omar never accomplished, perhaps because they did not think it worth the trouble. Nurullah Bey, chief of the Hakria Koords, and successor of the one-eyed Mustapha Khan, of Rewandoz, whom Reschid Pacha, took prisoner,

is a savage, warlike, thievish Koord, who had long lusted after the rich booty of the Christians in the Upper Zab valleys. Though these people were poor in comparison with the inhabitants of large cities, and fertile plains, yet they had a goodly property, and especially fine herds of cattle, a sufficient attraction for a Koordish robber prince.

Nurullah Bey considered himself strong enough to attempt alone his daring stroke against these Christian inhabitants of the highest snowy mountains, whose warlike character bore a higher reputation than it deserved. Accordingly, the Bey of Rewandoz requested the more powerful chief, Bedar Khan, ruling over all the clans of Budhan, to share in the exploit.

The power of this fanatical and enterprising chieftain, was so generally dreaded throughout Koordistan, that even the Pacha of Mossul was afraid to meddle with him. Shortly before the incursion of Beder Khan, into Dschulamerik, this Koordish chief met the Pacha by appointment, on the banks of the Tigris. The latter came to the spot with an escort of six hundred regular troops, and was, perhaps, more

frightened even than surprised to see the tents of the Koords, who had brought six thousand armed men along with him. The Pacha, who did not betray any symptom of alarm, despatched pressing private orders for cannon, and a reinforcement of Nizam, nor did he recover his courage, till they arrived. The Koordish chief, and Turkish Pacha, had a long interview, and parted as friends, and the Nestorians think that the incursion into Dschulamerk was secretly determined in that conference.

Dr. Grant, who was aware of the project of the Koordish chieftain, strove to avert the calamity. Peacemaking or mediation is a noble office, worthy of the Christian missionary, and the journey of Dr. Grant, through the most unruly Koordish tribes, to the residence of Bedar Khan, in order to prevent a fearful massacre, redounds more to his honour, than all his researches about the lost tribes of Israel. Bedar Khan received him courteously, smoked the tchibouk with him, and ate out of the same dish with him. The Nestorians said, on this occasion, that the "lamb had dined with the lion."

But the eloquence of the apostle of peace was not able to damp the fanaticism of Bedar Khan,

the revenge of Nurullah Bey, who had a feud with the Nestorian Patriarchy, or the thirst for plunder, shared with them, by Mohammed Khan, from Lake Van, their third colleague.

The British agents in the East, indeed, maintained that the Nestorians of Tijari, were not worthy of the interest shown them by Sir Stratford Canning, Colonel Shiel, and the missionaries. Messrs. Brandt and Stevens described them in a very different light from Dr. Grant, representing the Tijari to be just as rough, wild, and thievish, as the Koords, and that their patriarch was no better than Nurullah Bey. They added, that mutual robberies had been practised on each other by Koords and Nestorians for many years, and that no one could pronounce who was in the wrong.

Many writers have even conceived that the Nestorians, under their spiritual ruler, have been more impudent thieves than the Koords, under their temporal chiefs; but this opinion seems exaggerated. For to judge from the bad reputation attaching to Nurullah Bey, throughout the mountains, it does not seem probable that he was the victim of the Christian Patriarch. It is probable that the truth lies, as usual, between

these extreme opinions. From all I have learnt about the Nestorians, they seem a little better than their thievish neighbours, and though they may practice retaliation, it is excused by necessity. It is, however, always difficult to learn the truth in those countries, for Orientals are masters in the art of dissimulation, and the Europeans, who visit them, are rarely unprejudiced and penetrating observers.

It is clear, that although Messrs. Brandt and Stevens may have been unjust in charging the Tijani and their Patriarch, as men of thievish and violent propensities, the American missionaries attached much more importance to them than they deserved. These people, who pretended that they had bid defiance to the greatest conquerors, could not even resist the invasion of a horde of Koords. Nor do the letters of the Patriarch to the Mission at Urmia, give a high idea of his cultivation, being a tissue of flattery, hypocrisy, and full of a low grasping spirit.

The band of Nurullah Bey began their attack in the district of Disz, where the Patriarch then resided. Though the Nestorians had long been aware of the intentions of the Koords, they

allowed themselves to be surprised, and made but slight resistance. The Patriarch only thought of his own safety, and ran away, leaving his mother and brothers to be butchered, with thousands of other Nestorians, in the cruellest manner.

Mr. Stevens maintained that the obstinate irreconcilable character of the Patriarch, was a principal cause of the catastrophe. Instead of manfully facing the storm that he could not allay, and crucifix in hand marshalling his flock for resistance, and inspiring them with religious zeal, the holy man found it more expedient to gallop off to Mossul, leaving his people to their fate. The numerous horses of Bedar Khan, and Mahomed Khan, followed those of Nurullah Bey, and blood thirsty plundering bands, over-run the whole Nestorian district.

The smoke of the burning villages, eddied up over the snowy mountains, and the screams of injured women were mingled with the shouts of the victorious Koords. Neither the helplessness of age, nor the innocence of childhood, found any mercy. Almost half the Tijari fell in the massacre. Part of the survivors fled to Persia, many thousands remained as prisoners in the

hands of the Koords. The village of Sespatoi was the only place that offered a heroic and a desperate resistance, and all, save five or six who escaped into the steepest fastnesses, fell defending themselves.

When nothing more remained to be destroyed, the murderers and plunderers, retired with their captives and booty: many of the boys being circumcised and forcibly converted to Islam.

Bedar Khan left Zaiual Bey to govern the depopulated district—a desperado surrounded by a band of the most determined Koordish villains. All who escaped his clutches fled into Turkey.

The Pacha of Mossul played a double part during these transactions. He neither supported nor prevented the operations of the Koordish bandits. It is probable that, in the consciousness of his weakness, he was not sorry to keep aloof, and look on during the humiliation of the Christians. When the thundering notes of Sir Stratford Canning roused him to action, he sought to reconcile Bedar Khan, and the Patriarch. Mr. Stevens was sent on a special mission to Mossul, to give weight to the demands of the Porte. Under his influence, the Pacha was obliged to reinstate the Patriarch,

and procure the liberation of his children, which was refused by Bedar Khan, on the plea of their being Moslems.

Matters were in this position during my stay in the country ; and a few months later, the Koords graciously allowed the return of the Patriarch and of his followers to their own country. But they could not restore its prosperity. A depopulated and ruined country could not be rendered flourishing by any amount of firmans or diplomatic interference. The Nestorians will never lose the memory of their defeat, or the Koords of their triumph, and this remarkable Alpine republic has virtually come to an end. As regards the final act of the bloody drama, it may here be added, that the grey-headed old murderer, Bedar Khan, who attempted to force the Nestorian children into Islam, was soon after dispatched by the hand of a renegade.

The Catholics in the plain of Urmia, speak the same modern Syrian dialect as the Nestorians, with whom they are connected in type and manners. They have, at various times, receded from the doctrine of Nestorius. But though the Catholics of Urmia acknowledge the Pope, and have divine service recited in Latin, they

mingle many Oriental ceremonies with it, nor are they more devout or virtuous than the old believers. Their priests marry like those of the Catholic Armenians, and Maronites, the Holy See having been obliged to make this concession. Celibacy would be even much more difficult to practice in the East than in the West, nor could the poorest herdsman or mechanic, be induced to enter the priesthood, if he were forced to give up the thoughts of family. Among the Nestorian priesthood, celibacy is only required among the highest dignitaries. Children are selected for these dignities, at a tender age, and they commonly consist of Bishops' nephews.

Eugene Boret, of the Lyons society, established a Catholic Mission at Urmia, being stimulated by the apparent success of the American missionaries. But he overlooked the fact, that their triumph was the reward of their liberality, and that the moment their bribes ceased, their services and schools would fall to the ground. The French Lazzarists, whose funds were much more limited than those of their rivals, have made little impression. They admitted to me that they were quite crippled for want of means. Money which every where exerts a magic

influence, is the great enchanter in the East. In Persia, this magnet can even overcome the hostility of race and creed, nor does any man in any country, find so many friends and adherents as the Persian dives. Hadschi Baba had already disclosed the fact to us, and his judgment still applies in full force.

CHAPTER IX.

Travelling Plans — Adventure in a Persian House — The North-west Shore of Lake Urmia — Gertchin-Kaleh — Journey back through Salmas and Choi to Bajasid.

I HAD passed some pleasant weeks in the devout and friendly sphere of the American missionaries, whom I had learnt to esteem and love, and whose Christian piety and Presbyterian devotion are entitled to all praise. Nevertheless, even their American hospitality was rather dearly purchased at the cost of four hours per day, devoted to prayer-meetings and solemn litanies. To a travelling naturalist, especially, this seemed a loss of time; and the wilds and mountains appeared to offer a nobler exercise than a perpetual attendance on theological lectures. The comforts, good cheer, and con-

versation of the missionary ladies, the pretty Nestorians, and even the lovely head of little Judith, at length, lost their attraction; and I returned to the town of Urmia, where my people were still lingering in the house of the Nestorian woman.

It was necessary to devise a new travelling plan. I ascertained that it would be impracticable for me to attempt to reach the sources of the Zab-Ala, over the border mountains. The difficulty did not consist in the natural impediments presented by the country, but in its political state exclusively. It would have been much safer to trust to the magnanimity of a hyena, than for a travelling European to confide in the hospitality of Zaiual Bey, commanding the Upper Zab vallies. The missionaries advised me to cross over to Turkish ground, under the escort of a Turkish cawass.

Mirza Ali, who had given splendid examples of cowardice among the Koords, agreed entirely with the missionaries. He seemed tired of the journey, and anxious to retire with his golden earnings; and my other people appeared also shy of any farther adventures. Accordingly, I

resolved to pursue my journey along the north-west bank of the lake, and to proceed by Salmas to Bajasid, whence I hoped to explore the Ararat, the Murad-tschai, and, perhaps, to deviate into Koordistan, and the unknown regions near Lake Van.

The day preceding my departure from Urmia, I encountered an adventure of the most singular description, nothing of the kind having occurred to me elsewhere during my residence of five years in the East. It was also so utterly at variance with the experiences of other Europeans, and with the customs of Mohammedans, that I long tortured my brain to explain this abnormal occurrence, which could probably only find a solution in the local character of the town of Urmia.

The little Nestorian house that we occupied at Urmia, had a circular corridor of moderate dimensions, overshadowed by the friendly foliage of some plane trees. The wall separating this corridor from the neighbouring house, was ten feet in height, and also shaded by lofty trees. On the very first day of my residence, I had remarked in the neighbouring court, several curious women, climbing up or

down a ladder they had placed against the wall or the trees, and who looked into our corridor, attentively scanning all our doings, with their coal black eyes. As these women were not the most engaging, that we had seen in the East, I did not, at first, pay much attention to them. I conceived they were Nestorians, who seldom scruple to disclose their features to stranger Christians. But when I learnt from our hostess that they were Persian Shiites, I was surprized at this forwardness, so contrary to their national customs.

As I saw them perpetually ascending the ladder, to stare at the stranger, I asked them in Turkish, "if they would also allow me to climb the tree." They consented, smiling, and kept quite quiet. When I adjusted the ladder, I saw other prettier and better dressed women and girls in the court; I then asked them "if I should descend to them in the court," they replied that they would place a ladder against the terrace of my house, and then I could come down to them. The Pole, as well as the Persian cawass and the Armenian Pilosch, had overheard the conversation, and

were astonished at the facility of these women. I acceded to their invitation, but not without some precautions; I concealed my kinschal under my cloak, and directed the Pole to keep watch on the terrace, with a pair of pistols, and to rush to my rescue, if the adventure took a bad turn.

All the houses of Urmia, are of one story, and have flat roofs, like those of most southern countries. I might have jumped from the terrace, into the garden, without dislocating a bone. I preferred, however, to step carefully down the ladder, into a very pretty flower garden, when, to my utmost astonishment, I was immediately surrounded by a dozen women, all young, and many of them pretty. The domestic costume of Persian women, is not so becoming as the Turkish, but it is more pleasing than the monotonous wrappers worn in the street. Two of the women had young infants in their arms, which they handed to me quite familiarly. They asked me several questions, and wished especially to know "if I was an ecclesiastic, or a physician?" Unfortunately I could only understand a very little of their conversation,

I managed, however, to ask them "if there were no master at home?" "Oh! yes, our master is there with our mistress in the court," replied the girls, whom I now discovered to be slaves or attendants. I followed in the direction pointed out by the girls, and stepped under an open porch, whence I looked into a second court or garden, planted with plane trees.

A handsome Persian, with a long black mustachio, was seated there, smoking on the divan cushions, and a handsome young woman, richly attired, and with painted cheeks, was reclining in the eastern fashion, by his side. The handsome pair looked very dreamingly into the green canopy, or blue vault over head, without noticing me. But, leaning against the wall, close to the porch, was another Persian, holding a tschibouk in his hand, and keeping his eye fixed upon me, but without showing a vestige of anger or surprise. He asked me, in a very quiet tone, "if I liked the place?" and on my assenting, he added,

"Come again to-morrow, and view the house. Mirza Mehemed is now taking his kef, and does not like to be disturbed."

I saluted the Persian, and passed back through the court to my quarters, accompanied by the attendants. The girls returned the pressure of my hand quite warmly, and told me, I must come back the next day. The ladder had been untouched, and the Pole was still seated, with cocked pistols, watching from the wall. Nor was he a little surprised, when he heard of my strange adventure.

The Turkish speaking Persians of Aserbeidschan, who are much less cultivated than the Persian speaking people of Iran, though they are more courteous to Europeans than the people of Anatolia, yet they have still more antipathy to Christians, as may be seen in their practice of never eating out of the same plate with them. They are, also, less hospitable, allow less freedom to their women, and do not readily admit strangers in their houses. The general character of the inhabitants of Western Persia, was represented to me in this light, by men familiar with them. In the towns and villages, where there is a considerable admixture of Christian population, fanaticism is mitigated, and the freedom enjoyed by the Nestorian women, has made the lot of the

Persian women more endurable. This tendency may be peculiarly developed in the town of Urmia, whose population is peculiarly cultivated, and friendly to Europeans. Nor have the American missionaries contributed a little to create a favourable opinion of Franks, by their virtuous lives, liberal alms, and gratuitous instruction, even of Mohammedan children. Every traveller in Frank costume is regarded at Urmia, as a missionary, or a physician; and this might explain the mystery of my adventure. I was afterwards informed, that the same Persian had inquired all about me, from Mirza Ali, who had told him of my wonderful cures, and that I had restored a dead woman to life. His extravagant respect for the Frank hakhim, may have accounted for my free admission, and my friendly intercourse with the Americans, who are much esteemed, may have secured me a ready access. But, in any case, the adventure was very extraordinary, and gave me considerable insight into some Oriental ways, which are still, in a great measure, a closed book to Europeans.

On the 13th September, we quitted Urmia, and proceeded along the banks of the lake. The

road brought us to a branch chain, beyond the Nasslu-tschai, running down to the water, and separating the great plain of Urmia, from another smaller one, less fertile and cultivated. A fine new stone bridge of four arches, leads over the river to Tschunguraleh, a considerable village, with many orchards, having a large Tepe near it, in which several antiquities have been found. It is ascribed to Zoroaster and the Magi.

Our first night quarters were in the village of Guschtschi, eight leagues from the town of Urmia. The place is inhabited by very inhospitable Mohammedans, who received us sullenly, and to whom the cawass behaved in a cringing manner, perhaps, because they were Afschars, and had an admixture of Koordish blood in their veins. The vicinity of the free Koordish district may contribute in making the people here rather refractory, nor do the Persian nobles venture to hold so tight a rein here, as in the heart of the country.

On the following day, we pursued our journey along the north-west bank of the lake. The ground was broken, and the banks were higher than on the Eastern side. The village of Gertchin-Kaleh has received its name from an old

castle, built on a high promontory, overhanging the lake. This edifice, which I visited, stands on a limestone rock, perforated with caverns, and though it is considered by some to have been the treasury of the Mogul Emperor, Hulaku-Khan, its real origin and purpose are involved in mystery.

Near the grottoes, I noticed a fine clump of fig trees, the only ones I saw in this region. The view from the summit of the rock is very fine, embracing the lake, islands, and mountains.

On the 15th September, after a ride of two hours, we reached the head of Lake Urmia. The weather was splendid, but the heat was still very intense. We passed through the fertile district of Salmas, rested at Alsaret about noon, and stopped for the night in the village of Hamsa-Koi, near the town of Dilman.

The next day, we reached the town of Choi, and passed the night in a caravanserai. The remainder of my medicine chest was here emptied, by the importunity of the Persians, who never thought of paying for their drugs. I parted also with Mirza Ali, the cawass, who received a goodly pile of tomans, and having

quite recovered from his disgust in Koordistan, delivered a long parting oration, decorated with all the flowery periods of Eastern rhetoric. We travelled on rapidly from Choi, to the Turkish border ; and after a ride of three days, we reached the village of Killissa-Kent, where we obtained from the Persian governor, an escort of Koords, consisting of two men, to Bajasid ; the paucity of our numbers being thought a greater security, by not engaging the attention of the robbers. I heard, afterwards, that the escort had received instructions to represent us as the precursors of a larger caravan, and this stratagem was well adapted to procure us immunity by the fear of chastisement so near at hand, and the hopes of more attractive booty following at our heels.

We passed several stone huts, once peopled by Armenians, who had emigrated across the Araxes to Russia. We were also hailed by Koordish shepherds from their black tent ; but no accident befel us. At the top of a high pass, the mighty Ararat burst upon us in all its glory, filling up the whole background with his glaciers, whilst the splendid marble rocks of Bajasid formed the side-scenes. We soon after reached this Turkish border town.

I have described this second visit to Bajasid in my work on Russian Armenia, together with my visit to the southern side of Ararat, where I narrowly escaped being murdered by the Koords, by clambering over the rocks and hiding in a cave. The fright and fatigue of this excursion brought on a fever, which forced me to give up all further attempts to explore this district ; and I proceeded to Erzeroum, where I arrived in so weak a state, that I only recovered very slowly in the hospitable French Consulate ; and even when breathing the fresh breezes of the Euxine, I was still subject to returns of the complaint, which adhered to me for years, and defied medical skill after my return to Germany.

CHAPTER X.

Latest Events in Persia—Herat, Past and Present—The Political Importance of Khorasan and Herat—Russia's and England's Position in Central Asia—Probable Consequences of an Encounter between the two Great Powers in Asia—Russian Bias an Heirloom with the Mongolians—British Power in India—The Future—The Attitude of Affairs in the Caucasus and Koordistan.

SINCE the termination of my three years travels in the Caucasus, Koordistan, and Persia, events have come to pass, which, though they have not essentially altered the state of politics in the East, have yet exercised a considerable influence over it. I purpose giving a slight sketch, at the close of this outline of my wanderings, of the existing state of affairs.

The paralytic monarch of Persia, Mohammed

Shah, the unworthy son of the promising Abbas Mirza, had sunk a victim to disease, and the sceptre passed into the hands of his feeble son, without the numerous uncles, great uncles and cousins of the young Shah, making any attempt to wrest it from him. The cowardice of these claimants to the throne, being still greater than their ambition, as was seen after the death of Feth-Ali-Shah.

In 1837, the young Shah, then Crown Prince, and a child of seven years old, saw the Emperor Nicholas at Erivan, and was caressingly dandled upon the knees of that colossal monarch, and graciously titillated with the tips of the imperial moustachio. Even at that tender age, the successor to the Persian throne imbibed a profound impression of that august personage. The Cossack and body-guards, the thunder of artillery, and the whole military pomp, with which the Czar surrounded himself on that side the Caucasus, created so vivid an effect upon the imagination of the young son of Iran, that it annihilated for ever, any ambitious projects in a north-westerly direction, which he later might have formed.

Ambition and thirst for glory, are, however, the customary attributes of youth. At twenty, even an Oriental monarch, to whom every sensual pleasure is early offered, and as early exhausted, has his imagination inflamed by the traditions of the glorious deeds of his predecessors. Moreover, it has never been forgotten at the court of Persia, that the paradisiacal frontier district, near the Herirud, was once one of the costliest pearls in Persia's diadem. The memory of Nadir Shah is hated, because he was not of the race of Kadschars, though the reigning dynasty would gladly follow in the footsteps of that great conqueror, who vanquished Affghanistan and pillaged Delhi

The Grand-Vizier, Hadschi - Mirza - Agassi, the old crack-brained cannon-caster, and collector of tomans, fell, as the first victim to the change of rulers. He owed the preservation of his guilty head to the more humane spirit of the age, and, perhaps, in part, to the intercession of Russia, by the sacrifice of his treasures.

The friendly relations with the court of St. Petersburg did not appear in the least disturbed by the downfall of the Vizier, who had so long

governed and plundered the kingdom, in the Russian interest, nor did the poor people gain in any way by the change, for, according to very reliable information from Tabris, oppression and robbery are as much practised as ever. The appointments to the posts of governors and subordinate offices, as well as the purchase of villages, including the poor inhabitants, and all things appertaining to them, are still offered to the highest bidder. In the province of Aserbaidschan, extortion and exaction have increased to such an extent, that even Oriental apathy or endurance might well be exhausted.

The death of the Governor of Herat, Jar-Mohammed Khan, was snatched the crown from the head of the emir, the Kamran-Schah, during his lifetime, renewed the old claims which the Persian dynasty had at all times raised for the annexation of Khorasan. An army, the flower of which was composed of the regular troops organized by Colonels D'Arcy and Drouville, and by Major Lindsay crossed, in the year '837, the frontier of Persian Khorasan. Notwithstanding the numerous alterations, or deteriorations (as it may be,) which the British officers employed by Abbas

Mirza, and which still more recently, the French drill masters Damas, Seminot, Delacroix, and Pigeon have introduced in the regular forces, the cadres have held together, even after the dismissal of these European officers.

In spite of the very defective organization of these Persian troops, they have a decided advantage over the still more undisciplined corps of the Affghanistan princes. Financial ruin, disorder in every branch of the government, and palsied energy exist to a more hopeless extent, in Cabul and Candahar, than even in Iran, and thus the easy successes of Persia can be accounted for. In the year 1838, Herat made a long and successful resistance against the Persian expedition ; but from the latest accounts, the town seems this time to have opened her gates, almost without a blow, to the small force, which after assembling at Meschid, was sent against her.

The confusion and helplessness which ensued upon the death of the clever and energetic Jar-Mohammed, may have led to this result. Conolly describes Herat as being strongly fortified. The town is surrounded by an earth wall, and a ditch supplied with water, which

enclose an area of about three quarters of an English mile. Each of the five gates is protected by a fort; on the north side of the town stands a strong citadel, surrounded by a deep moat. From the description of Delacroix (who was a competent judge,) the Persian artillery is still in a wretched condition, notwithstanding the numberless cannon, which the old Hadschi caused to be manufactured in Teheran, and from the complete inexperience of the Persians in the modern art of besieging, it cannot be supposed that they should succeed better this time than in the year 1838.

From the great political importance of Herat, as one of the intermediate states, which at present prevent the concussion of the two great powers, I imagine that I may be rendering a service to my readers in putting together a few details respecting Herat, which I have gleaned from the different travellers of this century, from Christie to Conolly.

Herat is the capital of the state of the same name, and situated on the eastern border of the tableland of Iran, it was celebrated even in antiquity, as the capital of Khorasan (Artacoana), or the Blessed Place. All Oriental authors, without exception,

from Abulfeda and Ebn Batula, in whose time it had not yet arisen out of the heap of ashes to which the destroyer Genghis Khan had reduced it, emulate each other in celebrating its glory and magnificence. "Khorasan is the muscle fish of the world, and Herat is the pearl," says a Persian proverb, which certainly, after the idea a European has of a beautiful town, seems a most exaggerated conceit. Like most Oriental towns, the interior consists of a labyrinth of narrow, dirty, dingy lanes and alleys, which in many cases are nothing more than dark passages overshadowed by little narrow houses, such as only an Eastern can find pretty or habitable. There are four large covered bazaars which contain 1200 shops, and in which are concentrated all the life and movement of the town.

The usual accompaniments of all Eastern cities, such as dung heaps, stagnant pools, and every kind of putrescent matter, are not wanting in the streets of this "Pearl of the world." From Conolly's description, Herat is still dirtier than the dirtiest parts of Constantinople, Cairo and Tunis; and in the superfluity of the fifth element, (mud) even

a Polish village cannot rival it, and which, nothing can exceed, but the Cossack towns of Neu-Tscherkask and Ekaderinodar.

Herat, like most other large Oriental towns, owes neither to any peculiar accident, nor to any political circumstances, nor to the caprice of any of its rulers, with a building mania; its position and existence, as either Rome, Berlin or St. Petersburg. The attraction has been the remarkable fertility of the surrounding soil, and the freshness of its oases, which occupy the centre of the large and arid plateau, in the middle of Asia. Thus the celebrated beauty of Herat, consists, like that of Broussa and Samarcand, of a luxuriant girdle of the most exuberant vegetation, which encircles this filthy town. The Persians have named Herat, on account of these blooming gardens, "the town of the hundred thousand gardens."

The broad valley through which the river Herirud flows, whose waters are absorbed by the sands of the Turcoman desert, without one drop reaching the sea; is covered with the most lovely fruit and flower gardens, vineyards, fields of grain, groves of beech, and villages; whilst

crystal springs and babbling fountains rise out of the verdant soil. In the opinion of Orientals, the waters of this valley surpass in purity, coolness and refreshing qualities, all the other springs of Asia, only excepting those of Cashmire. The climate is temperate, and only such kind of fruit thrives there, as is indigenous in the cooler zones. The palm and the sugar cane, the orange and lemon groves of a warmer clime are completely wanting. Conolly mentions a singular custom of the inhabitants, who, in order to enjoy fruit in perfection, eat it from off the trees, instead of buying or selling it at the market. Each person, therefore, who visits any of the surrounding gardens is weighed both on entering and on leaving it, and is expected to pay for the difference of weight.

The magnificent edifices which all the ancient Oriental writers describe as having formerly embellished this regal city of Herat, have fallen into ruin, or have become completely buried under the soil. Historical catastrophes, such as the ravages which Mongolian and Persian conquerors, at different periods, inflicted upon the city, changed it into a heap of ruins, from which, however, it always rose again,

phoenix-like, from its ashes. The reason of this is to be found in the ever unexhausted blessings and riches which nature has so abundantly lavished on this fruitful neighbourhood, and which have never failed to draw back to it a fresh supply of inhabitants, both agricultural and mercantile—the latter being attracted by the position of Herat on the high road between Persia and India, and as being, on that account, an advantageous centre of commerce.

The royal garden of Herat, Bagh-Schai, as Hammer calls it, was once considered, even in the East, as one of the wonders of the world. It is now desolate, and its palaces in ruins, as all modern travellers attest.

The ruins of Mussalah “the place of devotion,” near Herat, are very magnificent, though in the most extreme state of dilapidation. It was erected by one of the Timurids, for the reception of the relics of the Iman Reza, but never completed; and in consequence of disputes and litigations, the bones of the saint were taken to Meschid. Conolly thought the style of building in Herat, grander than in Meschid. He describes long colonnades decorated by a mosaic, in white quartz and tessellated bricks.

The entrance of these colonnades is adorned by a lofty cupola, supported by arches and columns, and surrounded by twenty minarets. The highest of these he ascended by a flight of one hundred and twenty steps, and had the most exquisite view over the widely extended gardens and cultivated ground, which reminded him of the loveliness of an Italian landscape.

The chief exports of Herat are saffron, asafoetida, pistachio nuts, mastich, manna, a peculiar yellow dye or paint called ispiruk, and a gum named birzund, besides a great deal of dried fruit, and horses to India. Silk is also produced in the neighbourhood, but not in sufficient quantity for exportation. The iron and lead mines might be made exceedingly profitable, but they are extremely ill managed, as Kamran Schah acknowledged to Dr. Gerard. Fraser says, that excellent swords are manufactured at Herat, which have the beautiful ringing sound of the Damascus blades, Timur having had a colony of armourers brought from thence. Conolly praises the silk and woollen carpets of the most exquisite colours, which are made at Herat, and which vary in price according to size and texture, from 10 to 1,000 rupees. The

most costly are seldom exported as the land transport of such goods is still very insecure.

Herat is considered the capital of the high table-land of Khorasan, although situated on the outer border of this mountain fastness. The political boundaries of Khorasan have never been clearly defined. But from its configuration and position, it has exercised for ages a peculiar influence upon the history of Western Asia.

The almost fabulous Mongolian hero, Oghus Khan, had long before Genghis-Khan, turned his arms against the "Northern citadel of Iran," (as Carl Ritter aptly styles it,) and had taken possession of the capital. At a later period, the terrible devastator Genghis-Khan gave his sons the task of conquering, and of maintaining their ground in Khorasan, whilst he and his hosts swept like a flight of voracious and destructive locusts over the ill-fated Iran, whose weak ruler was quite unequal to resist the impetuosity of the Mongolian invaders. Such historical tragedies have been repeated more than once, in later centuries, especially under Hulaku-Khan, and Timur. The Timurids called Khorasan the breast of Iran, against which the first attack should be directed.

In the last century, Nadir Schah, the greatest conqueror since the days of Cyrus and Xerxes, arose out of Khōrasan, his native place, although the race of Affschar from which he sprung, dwelt principally in the province of Aserbeidschan in the West of Persia. This son of the sword, as he calls himself with the warriors of Khorasan, overcame the Turks, the Affghans, and the Hindoos. He carried on a bloody war of extermination, against the warlike races of the Eastern Caucasus, and penetrating into the very capital of the Great Mogul, overthrew his power upon the banks of the Indus, and the Ganges. At last, this ambitious conqueror met a similarly tragic end to that of so many other Persian Kings before him.

Feth-Ali-Schah has attempted to subdue and defend that important frontier land, by repeated expeditions against the Affghans, the Usbeks, and the Turcomans, the table-land situated to the south west of the Paropamisus chain of mountains, being incessantly subjected to their plundering incursions. In 1832, an English traveller, Alexander Burnes, in going from Bokhara through Khorasan, found Abbas Mirza, the crown prince of Persia, governor of this

province, which he had reconquered by the help of those troops which had been organized and disciplined upon an European footing, and with which he endeavoured to guard it against the sudden attacks of its predatory neighbours. He had not ventured to push forward as far as Herat, being probably deterred from penetrating farther into the interior, by apprehension of the power of Affghanistan in Cabul and Candahar, which at that time was more feared in central Asia, than was that of the weak sovereign of Persia. During two hundred years from (1568 to 1785,) the Persians had undisputed possession of Herat. Upon the formation of the new power, the occupation of Herat, by Nadir Schah, was of short duration. After the dismemberment of Cabul, Kamran, one of the pretenders to the throne of Delhi, seized upon the town, and its surrounding territory. In 1838, the Persians undertook that well known expedition against him, which Russia approved and England disapproved. The Russian Ambassador accompanied the Persian army to the very walls of Herat, whilst the English Ambassador and the British military instructors left Persia.

Herat is one of the most important stations

on the route between Iran and Hindoostan ; the extreme fruitfulness of the province, making it a most agreeable halting place, both for the peaceful merchant, and for the invading army. The importance of this town and province, both on account of their position, as well as their beauty and fruitfulness, have for many centuries excited the envy of Mongolian, Persian, and Affghan conquerors. The direct road from Herat to Cabul across the passes of the Paropamisus chain, and through the land of the wild tribes of the Eimak and Hegareh, is only practicable for small detachments. Sultan Baber, the renowned author and commander, has given a fearful description of the difficulties and dangers which he once encountered on this route. The great high road from Persia through Herat, Candahar, Ghasna, to Cabul, extends a distance of eighty five geographical miles, and offers nowhere any difficulties to an army. A caravan makes the distance between Herat and Cabul in from thirty to forty days—and a body of well mounted riders can, by forced marches, do it in eleven days.

Watering-places and stations are found all along the road, but houses and large towns, the

residences of petty princes or governors are few, and far between, like the blooming oases of the great desert of Sahara.

This road and district have always remained the great channel of land communication with India, and in spite of the circumnavigation of the Cape, they still retain considerable importance. Before that event, Cabul and Candahar were regarded as the gates of India, and the road in question, as the only access to its fertile territory. In fact, since time immemorial, trade has remained faithful to this high road, which has accordingly been the centre of attraction for all robber hordes.

Even if the political relations of Asia were now what they were a hundred years ago, the direction of the channel, and the position of these countries, would be a matter of indifference. Conquest has always been a matter of ebb and flood in this part of Asia, which from the time of Xerxes to that of Paskiewitsch, has been subordinate to the destinies of the great neighbouring empires. Now as always, the fate of Central Asia hangs on the rivalry of two vast conflicting empires, at the opposite extremities of the hemisphere.

The petty contests of Tartar princes have now sunk into insignificance, and it is not impossible that the descendants of the Huns and Timur, will never rise again to a formidable attitude and importance. The same remark applies to all these intermediate states. The progeny of Genghis have become common highwaymen, the splendour of Affghanistan is a fable, and Persia bends its head humbly to the beck and nod of its relentless Northern neighbour.

Since the fatal experience of the Affghan campaign, England has given up all thoughts of contests beyond the Indus. It was a great mistake to bring the gentle vegetarians of the Ganges, into collision with the hardy Mohammedan clans of the Khyber Pass. In their time of trial, the red-coats and Hindoos would have preferred a few Circassian skirmishers to all our wooden walls. The attempt, in fact, was too remote from the sea, the great centre of British power.

All who compare the relative position of Russia and England in Asia, cannot doubt that victory will evidently incline to the former. Great Britain must remain on the defensive,

within the limits of her productive and wealthy peninsula. All conquests in that quarter from Alexander to Nadir, have emanated from the north.*

Russia has made immense, and apparently unproductive efforts to subdue the Caucasus, and absorb Central Asia. Her great sacrifices must have a great motive; no less than the ultimate incorporation of India.

Whenever an ambitious Russian emperor sways the sceptre, he can force Persia, in her present prostrate condition, to give up Gilan, Masanderan, and Aserbeidschan. We have already said, that multitudes of Russian nobles were indignant at Nicholas not having claimed

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* Russia has two modes of procedure in conquering Asia. Gradual encroachment or sudden springs. The former is the safest and most certain. By assimilation she has already absorbed vast tribes of nomads, and an endless population of horsemen, besides the Cossacks. By carrying on this system she can, in time, absorb the Koords, Affghans, &c., carrying the caravan road to India, and launch a vast host of Mahomedan cavalry against Hindoostan. She has, already, a cavalry force of 300,000 men at her command, which, though not regular troops, would do her good service in Asia; and there can be no doubt, that by this gradual process of encroachment, she would reach the Punjaub and the Hindoo Koosh in half a century.

more from Persia, after the victories of Paskievitch. Nicholas does not seem to have aimed at the character of a great Oriental conqueror. His thoughts were more absorbed by the West, and he appeared satisfied with his palaces on the foggy Neva. He preferred crushing democracy in the West, to enacting the part of Great Mogul in the East, or taking vengeance on Lord Palmerston's propagandism, by hurling the red-coats into the Indian ocean.

But rulers and dynasties change, and a successor of Nicholas may act differently. Russia has it in her power, either to encroach and absorb gradually, the intermediate states of Central Asia, or by a bold dash to seize her victims. The former is probably the wiser plan, and carried out by the vigorous arm of a Yermolof, and the crafty diplomacy of her golden agents, it is probable that she would attain her object more easily in this way, than by grasping suddenly at her victims. The Shah and Cabul chiefs would be certain to yield to her menaces or bribes, and smooth her gradual advance to India. But in case of resistance, they would be reduced at once, and in the present state of Asia, a few years would

suffice to pave the way for a Russian invasion of India.

All who know Russia, admit that she has attained a greater military power under Nicholas, than under any previous ruler. There is no second example in history of so vast a power, with a deified ruler, and a slavishly obedient people organized into a vast camp, furnished with all the appliances and contrivances of civilization, wielded for destructive and ambitious purposes. Sesostris, Timur, Attila, had no such means at their disposal. The Marquis of Custine thinks that the Sultan, the Emperor of China, and the Kubo of Japan, have not so despotic an authority over their subjects as the Czar. There is no limit to his power, he is adored by the serfs, and an insurrection of the nobles would be put down at once, by the sanguinary resistance of the peasants supporting the Crown. Any sacrifices would be made to secure Byzantium by this fanatical Russian race, whose patriotism is much more intense than that of the Western nations.

“L’empire du monde est devolu désormais non pas aux peuples turbulents, mais aux peuples patients.” Such was the prophecy of a

clever French legitimist, uttered at Moscow, at the sight of the wonderful and terrible passive obedience of this race of slaves, worshipping their chains, and *ivre d'esclavage*. This stern advocate of absolutist principles, was actually outraged at the sight of the utter prostration of humanity and dignity, exhibited by the grinding despotism of Muscovy, a power raised up, as he thinks, as a kind of scourge of God, for the punishment of our sins, and the purgation of nations sunk in luxury and effeminacy.

A similar opinion is uttered by Mickiewicz, who cautions the Western nations against slumbering whilst dangers and storms are preparing in the north. He warns them that the time is not yet come to convert their swords into ploughshares.

He considers the great secret of the rise of the Russian power to have consisted in the adoption of what he calls the Russian *tone*, or spirit, welding all its national elements into a colossal unity, organized for destructive and absorbing purposes, and converting the vast expanse of the empire into a great barrack. Peter the Great put the finishing stroke to the work, by the introduction of a German organi-

zation, but the real secret of the success of Russian encroachment is to be found in the adoption of the Mogul spirit, transmitted to the Romanoffs, and to modern times.

The slavic historian, whose views we are here analyzing, represents that Genghis-Khan, after having passed many days and nights in fasting and prayer, and in intercourse with spirits, descended from the table-land of Central Asia, to fulfill his mission. He declared himself appointed by Heaven as the scourge of men, and caused the terrible Tartar "Hallah," to resound and re-echo through two hemispheres. The history of that period, shows us the terror which then impressed the minds of men. It may be affirmed that the Mongolian spirit had a certain inexplicable influence, robbing its opponents of all confidence, and paralyzing all their actions. Their arms dropped from the hands of their warriors, and princes fled far away, to get out of hearing of the Tartar battle cries. The Grand Dukes of Muscovy, who were long subject to the Mongolian empire, ultimately acquired the same spirit, and when they commenced in their turn to shout "Hallah," first Russia, and afterwards its neighbours began ,

to shake and tremble. This is what Slavic writers have styled, the Russian spirit, or tone, which they regard as embodying the secret of the influence and power of Russia.

Ivan Vassiliewitch, surnamed the Terrible, a man of high reputation, and whose memory is venerated in Russia, understood how to carry out this spirit in a way, never before attempted, save among the Moguls. Hence, all that he attempted succeeded, hence, also he was one of the creators of the greatness of Russia, and he was able to accomplish things which Batu-Khan, Tamerlane, and Amurath had never ventured upon, and which Claudius or Nero had never conceived. Ivan had passed half his life in what he called a "convent," surrounded by monsters, he had invented every imaginable torture for his faithful subjects, and he had devised plans of putting to death thousands, and hundreds of thousands of nobles and plebeians, in the most exquisite torments, inventing and executing every kind of infernal cruelty, with a sort of humorous spirit. And yet Ivan Vassiliewitch was more popular with, and beloved by all classes, than most princes have been. When he died, he was wept by the whole nation. On hearing the

intelligence, the entire population of Moscow ran about the streets, lamenting and shedding tears, and howling in despair at their loss. Even the families of his victims were inconsolable at his death, and clothed themselves in mourning attire. The Russian historian, Karamsin, who relates all the details of the history of Ivan, and supports them with historical evidence, lets his pen drop in amazement at this epoch in his country's annals. He does not know how to qualify his popularity and the fidelity of the Russian people to such a prince. But Adam Mickiewicz steps in and offers him this solution: that an instinctive and brutish adherence to the sceptre, unconnected with any feelings prevalent throughout the rest of Europe, passed from the Moguls into the Russian character, and hence, that the Muscovites crowd round their leader, like a tabun of wild steppe horses round their stallion leader. For it is well known, that the whole herd follows its patriarch blindly, and when he falls, not knowing how to proceed, is scattered in all directions at random.

Subsequent centuries have not produced any ruler to rival Ivan, in developing and directing the Russian spirit; but all recent Russian

monarchs have inherited something of his spirit, especially Peter the Great, who, however, made a few alterations in it, and smote the Strelitzes, whom Ivan had raised to power. The instruments and influences which roused the early Slavi to action, such as the Lithuanian Horns and the Mongolian Hallas, have been latterly supplanted by the ukase. This word has now the same magic effect on the Northern Slavi. It palsies them with fear, or drives them onwards; it does not suffer the Russians to remain inclosed within the geographical limits of their State; they must be thrown upon the Tartars and Circassians; they must advance to the Danube or the Oxus; they are forced to march against Teheran or Constantinople. The spirit of the ruler holds sway; it is the motive and the object of every action. All the living *must serve*. Servitude has become the order of the day. Any family in Russia, which has not, for several generations, served the state, and which, therefore, has acquired no "Tchin," or rank, is known to be deprived of the titles of nobility, and degraded to the level of the serf. Even the greatest poets of Russia, like its greatest heroes and generals, have invariably written and acted in conformity with

this peculiar, energetic, and terrible spirit. Derjavin has rivalled Puschkin, and Zizianoff has emulated Suwaroff, in this respect ; nor can it be denied that they obtained important results with it. Even the most intelligent adherents of constitutional forms, and of democracy, must grant a certain power to absolutism, which freedom and enthusiasm cannot always supply. The unlimited despot is able to wring sacrifices from his people, to carry out his vast views or ambitious projects, which place resources in his hand often greater, even in a poor country like Russia, than those resulting from the free-will offerings of patriotism in countries like England or America. Patriotism commonly flags, and is silenced by natural egotism, when men are required to offer their last penny, and their last drop of blood on the altar of their country. This selfishness of the majority, which is much more deeply rooted in old countries than among youthful and rising states, can perhaps only be effectually subdued by this terrible Russian spirit, as Mickiewicz calls it, though it may emanate from an Ivan or a Robespierre.

Mighty England, notwithstanding her great-

ness and prosperity, is not in a condition to present the same extreme and compulsory powers of resistance as Russia. Her European troops in India, scarcely amount to 45,000 men, and, accordingly, do not exceed one-sixth of the three armies of Bombay, Madras, and Bengal, which, including the detachments at Hyderabad and in the Punjab, present a united force of 264,000 men. In these three armies, the proportion of British to native regiments is 6 to 252. The royal troops form a special corps of 30,000 men. The total number of British military, under the orders of the Governor-General of Calcutta, scarcely amount to one-third of the Russian force assembled in and around the Caucasus, and on the Persian frontier. Our reliance on the fidelity, obedience, and bravery of the Sepoys, depends, moreover, entirely on the maintenance of that kernel of British troops. In all battles and hardships, the English must lead the way. The power of England in India was founded exclusively by English troops, and all competent judges admit, that it can only be preserved by them.

The corps of British officers in India is

admirable. Leopold Von Orlich, an excellent judge* of military matters, who has written a valuable work of travels on India, affirms that this numerous corps of officers (820 staff and 5,500 subalterns) has not its equal in the world, as regards spirit and practical ability, and that he has not found so much mutual self-denial in officers and soldiers, in any army, as in that of British India. A healthy spirit, love of action, feeling of independence, self-reliance, and sound practical sense, are peculiar characteristics of English officers.

But notwithstanding all the efficiency of the corps of officers, and of the Indian establishments, the numerical disproportion between the European and the native troops is too great to afford a sufficient guarantee of stability and duration to the British sway. Only about 45,000 Europeans rule over 100,000,000 Asiatics in Hindoostan. Hitherto, indeed, England has issued victorious from every struggle, except in the Afghan war. But the real trial of her strength will be when she has to contend, not with the Sikhs and Mahrattas, but with a colossal power and a mighty conqueror on Indian ground. When the destructive dis-

tempers that yearly decimate our hosts are backed by the gaps that would be made in the British ranks by the lancers of the steppe, and by Russian bullets, it is doubtful if the obedience of the Sepoys would endure very long. The Mohammedan Sepoys are, moreover, much less reliable than their Hindoo comrades. Nor is it impossible that they will prove very refractory in the next struggle.

Orlich states, that the Mohammedans of India, wherever they are scattered, and however they are engaged, belong to one large family, closely cemented by the tie of religion, and prepared to defend their faith to the utmost. Faith and government are one in Mohammedan states; nor will they ever forget that their power was overthrown by the British in India. The eyes of all Mohammedans, in every part of India, will be directed to the man who preaches a crusade against the infidel. Symptoms of this feeling have been detected even in the army. I admit that Orlich adds, that owing to the excellent discipline of the Indian army, a defection of the Mohammedans would be very difficult, so long as no great power appears on the scene to assist them. But the very exis-

tence of this rebellious tendency is a formidable symptom, coupled with the aggressive attitude of Russia in Asia.

All who know the situation of affairs there, must be aware that nothing can secure British supremacy in India, save an energetic support from home. Even the last war on the Sutlej was a severe trial for the British Generals. The soldiery of Runjeet Singh, though deprived of the supervision of that judicious Prince, and disorganized since the departure of the European drill inspectors, opposed a resistance to the British arms, such as they had not encountered since Tippoo Saib. It was only after the most sanguinary strife, that victory inclined to the British side. If a heavy blow from a foreign power were added to severe intestine disturbances, a catastrophe could scarcely be avoided. The victory would be much more dubious in a conflict with a power which can send into the field a cavalry force more than twice as strong as the entire British Indian army, including all arms and branches of the service. Nor would Russia be deterred by the loss of one army, for her steppes and military colonies offer inexhaustible storehouses

of soldiers. A command from the banks of the Neva would call new hordes from the Ukraine to the Kirghis steppes—vast masses grasping the musket and crossing the saddle to carry out the Russian spirit. The bam-bam-magadu of the Sepoys, on the blooming banks of the Indus, would meet with a response in the Mongolian hurrah and hallah, and it is doubtful if the melodious cheer of the Indian mercenaries would not fade away before the rough shouts of the northern barbarians.

A heavy loss of European troops would involve the dissolution of the Indian army. The destruction of 30,000 royal red-coats would seal the fate of the empire. The European regiments are the corner stone of that fabulous fabric, sheltering a hundred million of men. The Sepoy is only a mercenary, to whom all Christians, be they English or Muscovites, appear unclean, but who serves them faithfully as long as he finds them the stronger party, and whilst they leave the Hindoo religion and castes untouched. But the Sepoy would just as readily sell his services to the Emperor of Russia for nine rupees per month, and would serve him as bravely as the Queen of England, of whom

he is equally ignorant. The Sepoy is ignorant of politics and history; he only knows Brahma, his caste and his family. It is a matter of perfect indifference to him whether his sovereign and viceroy speak English or Russian, dwells in London or Petersburg, and are limited by a parliament, or issue absolute decrees.

✱ Let us sum up in a few words, the state of affairs in Central Asia. Russia is on Asiatic ground, her proper element, like England on the ocean, invulnerable; nay, almost intangible, Her heel of Achilles stands on European soil, near the Vistula, but it is guarded by the thickest chain armour. Russia will never be exposed to an aggressive war, on the part of England, in Asia. Her frontiers on this side are alike protected by steep hill forts, inhospitable wastes and steppes, and the warlike spirit and countless cavalry of her border population. Russia would have fewer impediments in a march to India, than all former conquerors who have taken this direction. Alexander, Timur, and Nadir Shah were forced to beat down much greater resistance than that which could now be opposed to a Russian invading army, by the weakened, disorganized and impotent central

states. A Russian expedition against British India would be probably supported by the Kings of Persia and Cabul, because they know that they are at the mercy of Russia, and feel that they have no choice but to join the conqueror, or be trampled under foot. The natural impediments to such an expedition would be unimportant to Russia, and an alliance with the intermediate states, would diminish the obstacle of distance in space.

An Emperor of Russia having the control over the property and lives of sixty millions of subjects, accustomed to Slavonic obedience, could lead across the Indus, hosts that would not be numerically inferior to the united Indo-British forces of Bombay, Madras and Bengal, and which would have the immeasurable advantage of consisting almost entirely of Great Russians, whereas only a very small body of our Indian army is native British. The Moslem elements of a Russian invading army, would also be of incalculable value, as instruments in countries, whose Mahommedan population still regret the loss of power, and retain a spirit of revenge against their British masters.

But the real superiority of Russia is derived

from the elasticity, self-denial, patience, and endurance of an empire with a military organization, under the most unlimited of all despots. The Briton carries on war only so long as it redounds to his advantage; the Russian fights so long as the Emperor bids him. England gave up the contest in North America, and recognized the independence of her former colony, when she saw, that even in the event of her recovering it, the advantage would be overbalanced by the losses of an exhausting war. All the oratorical powers of the high Tories in Parliament were not able to prevent the recognition of America's independence. Afghanistan was also evacuated by the English, when they saw that this country would not yield an equivalent for the sacrifice of blood and treasure, that must be made to retain it. Russia has continued steadily her contest with the mountaineers of the Caucasus for the last sixty years, not because it is demanded by interests of State, but because it is the will of its Emperor, who is not responsible to any ministry, or hampered by any parliament, and whose ambitious projects are not counterbalanced by any opposition in the State. England's power, is strong, like

manhood, and transient as life ; Russia's power, to use the words of a French orator, "is vast as space and patient as time."

Since the period of my journey, the Turks have made a victorious campaign in Koordistan. Omar Pacha was the life and soul of the Turkish camp, and his sagacious tactics succeeded in driving the mighty Beder-Khan, the persecutor of the Nestorians, out of his mountains, and eventually in capturing him. This was a heavy blow to the Koordish power, south of Lake Van. Even the savage Hakkari Koords, humbly supplicated the mercy of the conqueror. The recollection of the chastisement which they received will last some years. The tribes will remain quiet for a season, nor will their chieftains attempt any open mutiny against the authorities of the Porte. But the people will continue as of yore ; nomadic, thievish, regarding themselves as free, and their own masters in the mountains, and despising the authority of the Turkish governors. The presence of this numerous, warlike and refractory people will be a constant source of danger to the Porte, in connection with the increasing depopulation, and impoverishment of the cities, and the progressive

deterioration of Asiatic Turkey. There can be no other fortune in store for Anatolia, save that of falling into complete dissolution and anarchy, and becoming a prey to independant, barbarous chieftains, or of being incorporated as a supplement to the Northern Giant, whose pressure will be tamely born by the cowardly Armenian, and the Turk of the towns, whilst the Koords will perhaps repeat the part of the Circassians, displaying less heroism, but the same stubborn endurance ; and inflamed by still greater Mohammedan fanaticism, and hatred of Christians, they may prolong the tragedy to the end of this century.

I admit that the prospects of the East, defy all calculation, because unforeseen accidents and the possible rise of great men, who make an epoch in history, may lie beyond our present political horizon. Moreover, the basis of both the great powers of Asia, rests on European ground. As their centre of gravity is thus inclosed within the circle of our political convulsions, vibrations proceeding from the centre may be traced to the circumference. Thus a flash emanating to-morrow, from the banks of the Seine, may find a responsive echo to its

accompanying thunder, on the Bosphorus and Indus, as well as on the Thames and Neva. But the momentous question perplexing all far-seeing minds, from morning to night is, whether after all clouds are dispersed on the old continent, the sun is destined to irradiate a refreshed and invigorated earth, or to shine fitfully on nought but ruins and corruption.

THE END.

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